

LIFE AND DEATH



BY MRS. BOOTH.

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LIFE AND DEATH.

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DELIVERED IN LONDON

BY

MRS. BOOTH,

Catherine (Mountford)

OF THE SALVATION ARMY.



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PREFACE.

IN consenting to publish the following addresses I have acceded to very earnest solicitation on the part of numerous hearers and friends, who wish for some more direct and pointed truth on the subject of personal salvation. I deeply regret the imperfect manner in which topics so momentous are handled, but time and strength fail for a more complete revision; so I commit them to God, praying that the great end, both in their delivery and publication, may be accomplished, even the SALVATION of those who read.

CATHERINE BOOTH.

LONDON, *November*, 1883.

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RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

ACTS xviii. 17.—“ *And Gallio cared for none of these things.*”

WHEN riding in the train a little while ago, I overheard a conversation between two gentlemen—a young man on one seat, and an elderly man opposite to him on the other. They were conversing about some person recently dead, and I heard the young man say to the other, ‘Oh, he had no more religion than I have.’ I thought to myself, *There* is a state of confessed indifference on the subject of religion! I wonder whether that young man is an infidel; I will try to get an opportunity of speaking to him before the journey ends. And so I did; and I found that he professed to believe in God, and the Bible, and heaven and hell, as much as I did, and yet he had betrayed in that conversation that he had no religion, and that it was a matter of indifference to him, and I thought, Now this is the state of tens of thousands in this so-called “Gospel land;” they, like Gallio, “care for none of these things.”

These words with respect to Gallio were not spoken directly of his spiritual state, but with respect to matters that affected him more as a magistrate and a ruler; nevertheless, they convey an idea to us of his indifference on great spiritual questions, which concerned him really as much as they concerned Paul, only that he did not see it. If it had been, as he supposed, a question of mere names and Jewish

ceremonies, his indifference would have been justifiable, but he was mistaken here; his premises were wrong, and therefore his conclusions were wrong. The question as to how God ought to be worshipped and served, as to whether the Bible were a Divine revelation, as to whether Jesus Christ were really the Son of God, were questions quite as important to Gallio as they were to Paul, if he had only *seen their importance*. His indifference sprang out of his mistake. He was mistaken about the whole question, and therefore was indifferent, and he drove them away, as having no responsibility in the matter.

This is just the position of tens of thousands round about us to-day. They have heard about religion; but they have a notion that it is a system of absurdities, and contradictions, and cant, fit only for half-imbecile minds, that it is no question of theirs, and so dismiss it from their minds—they “care for none of these things.”

Now, I want to-night to talk about this state of religious indifference. I want just to enquire into it for a little. In passing, we might say—Who knows what Gallio lost by his indifference? If he had just taken the trouble to enquire into these matters, about which Paul had been dragged before his judgment-seat, who knows what the issue might have been both to Gallio and the Church of that time? For anything *we know*, we might have had an Epistle of Gallio to the Churches! He might have helped to roll along the rising tide of Salvation, and been instrumental in the conversion of hundreds of souls; but all this was lost for the want of a bit of trouble! Oh! what a great many blessings, how much light, how much

instruction, and how much influence for good, many professing Christians lose for lack of a bit of trouble ! And how many sinners will lose their souls from the same cause ! No soul was ever saved yet who was TOO IDLE TO SEEK !

But I want to distinguish, in the first place, between indifference and indecision, which is quite another state of mind. Indecision always pre-supposes controversy going on in the mind—a state of unrest. A person may be undecided who is not indifferent. He may be wide awake, anxious, deliberating, and arguing the question as to whether he shall give his heart to God or not—that is not indifference.

Neither is it infidelity. Infidelity is not indifference. Infidels are rarely at ease ; *they wish they were*. They would give anything to be at ease. I have met and talked with many, and God has used me to the saving of a few ; but, with one or two exceptions, I never met with an infidel who, on close conversation, made it manifest that he was satisfied with his condition.

He is in the position of the man who had been to a lecture, the object of which was to prove there was no God, and, as he was coming out, another man said, ‘ Well, hasn’t it been good ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ he said, ‘ I am *almost* satisfied. I intend to send the lecturer a sack of corn ; but, if he had *quite* satisfied me, I would have sent him two.’

And there are many in that condition ; they are not quite satisfied. This is a state of unrest, not of indifference.

Indifference is often a state of mind of people who intellectually believe in God, and in Divine revelation. How wonderful it is that any being with a mind, a

conscience, and a soul, can remain indifferent after he has once heard, or once professed to believe, that there is a God, an eternity, a heaven, and a hell, and that he is a candidate for one or the other! Nothing can explain this mystery, except that "the god of this world hath blinded" his "mind."

If people were to be told half as much with respect to their bodily danger as they often hear in one sermon about their souls, you would never be able to make them indifferent any more, until they had adopted the means recommended for the improvement of their temporal condition. You convince a man that he is out of health, show him the importance of seeing a physician and getting a remedy, and, if he is a sane man, he will never rest again till he has put himself under the means which he thinks most likely to *cure him*.

But it is not so with people's souls. How can this be, when the interests at stake are so much greater? How can you account for it? You get them to a service, and a little bit aroused; but the first great anxiety of the Devil is to get them to sleep again. He says, 'I must not let that man hear such truth any more;' and he finds something to attract his attention as soon as he gets outside. The seed is sown, but the birds—evil spirits—come and snatch it away before it has time to take root. The great effort of the Devil is to keep people indifferent, and nothing does he dread so much as awakening and arousing preaching, or other instrumentalities calculated to awaken and alarm them.

Oh that the Church understood this! Oh that Christians understood it! It seems to me sometimes,

instead of understanding it, they appear to be partners with the Devil in trying to keep people asleep. They shrink away from any direct, personal, earnest, thorough dealing with souls that would be likely to awaken them to a sense of their danger.

They do not recognise the fact as they ought, that Satan has got men fast asleep in sin, and that it is his great device to keep them so. He does not care what *we* do, if he can do that. We may sing songs about "the sweet by-and-by," preach sermons, and say prayers, and go the jog-trot round and round, barrel-organ fashion, till Doomsday, and he will never concern himself about us if we *don't wake anybody up*; but, if we wake anybody, he will gnash on us with his teeth. This is our work—to *wake people up*. That is your responsibility, you Christians. If that man with whom you are coming in contact dies, and is damned, in his sleep, and you never went the common-sense, reasonable way to wake him, God will demand his soul of you. Wake him! WAKE HIM! Remember, sinners are *indifferent*.

Let us look at one or two causes of this indifference. I say, continually, *How is it* that we cannot get men awake?—cannot get them to realise the verity and importance of spiritual things? How is it they *can* be indifferent.

The first cause is, that they are in *ignorance of their danger*. They are like a man walking asleep by the side of a precipice—they do not see their danger—they do not apprehend the dire, devilish, damning character of sin!—they do not realise the consequences of sin—they do not understand—they are in darkness, in ignorance, on the whole question. Now, what we

want to do, is to enlighten them—make them face the great problems of existence—life, death, judgment, eternity, heaven, and hell. Enlighten them: they are in ignorance.

Ah! how many are in wilful ignorance! “Of this they are wilfully ignorant.” There are some in this Hall. You need not have been ignorant. Some of you had a Christian mother, who did her best to enlighten you before you came to the age of maturity. Some of you have sat under Gospel ministries, where there has been both light and power, and yet you remain *wilfully ignorant*. God has taken endless trouble with some of you. He has knocked you about to try to awaken you but you would not be aroused. He has got your head round sometimes, and made you face the problems of the future; but, as quick as ever you could, you have turned it back the other way; you *would not* look, you are *wilfully ignorant*. Mind, it won't make DAMNATION ANY EASIER! You will be woke up by-and-by, never to go to sleep again. If you once *get to hell*, there is no sleeping there; indifference is the last thing that will ever visit that dark, black abode!

You can shut your eyes now. Oh! yes, against the glorious Sun of Righteousness Himself; you can turn your head away, and refuse to see; but you will never go to sleep any more, when once you are awaked for the last time. May God wake you *now*! “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” You *can* do it, or He would not bid you do it. It is *your* work to arise. God will make you stand, and keep you going when you are up. “Arise from the dead, and *Christ shall give thee light*.” Will you awake to-night?

will you face right round? will you let the light of the eternal world come streaming on your spiritual eyeballs? Will you look? If you will only look, you will be saved; if you go to sleep again, Christ Himself cannot save you. The Lord help you to wake up!

Another cause of this indifference is *pre-occupation of mind*. A lady said to me, 'How have you managed to get your children converted so early?' 'Oh!' I said, '*I have been beforehand with the Devil*. I have 'not allowed my children to become pre-occupied with 'the things of the world, *before* I have got the seed of 'the Kingdom well in. I have taken time by the 'forelock, and cheated his Satanic Majesty out of his 'opportunities! and now he can only grin and abide 'the consequences.' The Lord help *you* to be beforehand with the Devil with *your* children! You have a baby—don't be afraid of beginning too soon. If you give the enemy an inch, he will take a yard. Be beforehand with him. The reason why the great proportion of people remain indifferent, is that they are pre-occupied in the race for riches, for learning, for gentility, for position; there will be more souls lost through striving after *position*, among decent people, than through all other sins put together, and all other ambitions put together. They say, 'We will be up in this world, if we go down in the next.' And some of them get up, and the higher they get up, the deeper they fall. The Lord have mercy upon people who are selling their souls, and the souls of their wives and children, for position.

I said to a gentleman at St. John's Wood once, 'Have you settled this matter?' He said, almost grinning in my face with vexation, 'No, I have not.

‘The fact is, I have no time to think about religion.’ He was very much annoyed that he had been *made* to think about it for three-quarters of an hour. I said, ‘You will have to find time one day, how shall you manage that? Death won’t ask your leave; don’t you think it would be wise to find a bit of time to prepare for it?’

Pre-occupied—full of other things. People tell us in our “anxious meetings,” ‘I am so busy,’ or, ‘I am set on this or on the other.’ And, alas! alas! while they are running hither and thither, the reckoning-day comes; death overtakes them; bronchitis, or fever, or apoplexy, or accident comes, and they ARE GONE! They never thought they would be damned, they never intended such a thing. THEY! not likely, with all their light and opportunities. Oh, dear, no. But they were pre-occupied, they did not see whither they were going. Satan took care to keep them too busy to look God, and death, and judgment, and eternity in the face.

We read that there are something like 350 people killed in the streets of London every year. How is that? Oh! they tell us it is through pre-occupation of mind. Here is a gentleman walking to his office, his thoughts are carrying him on swifter than he is aware of, he is not thinking of the hansom or the omnibus close by; he is wondering whether that ship has come in, what he shall make by that cargo, or by that scheme he is negotiating; he forgets he is in the midst of danger, when on comes the hansom, and down he goes, and *he is killed*.

He was *pre-occupied*. That pre-occupation led to his destruction. Oh, what an illustration of people on

the platform of time ! The Devil never lets his people be awaked if he can help it ; HE never puts them on the sick-bed. It is GOD DOES THAT. Do not think Satan will make you break your leg, or do anything else that will give you time to THINK. He will keep you going, and never give you one stopping-place, nor one hour to look back and *think* of God, or eternity, or your soul. He will keep you *on, on, on, rushing on ever*.

The other morning, as I went through the City, I said to a friend who was with me, ‘Look at the men ‘streaming along, look how they go, how energetic ‘they are, how intent ; you can see what is going on ‘in many of their minds.’ I said, ‘If we could only ‘get people as much concerned about God, eternity, ‘and the salvation of the world, as these men are about ‘their earthly affairs, what might not be done ?’ If you were to speak to them about eternity, they would think it an impertinence, that you should dare to intrude religion upon them at such a time, when they are so full of other things : and on they go, and there is scarcely a week passes but brings us the intelligence of some suddenly gone into eternity. The day dawned on them most unexpectedly, perhaps in the height of their prosperity, when God said, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

Let me try to show you the *folly* of this state of indifference. It would be very foolish to expose yourself to any great *temporal* loss or suffering, if by a little fore-thought and consideration it might be averted. Suppose you were afflicted with some terrible disease, which by the use of judicious means might be arrested, and your life be saved ; but when your friends warn you and counsel you to seek medical

aid, you say, 'I don't care about my lungs or my liver; 'here are these books, I *must* attend to them; here is 'this shop, this building; I cannot stop to think of 'my body;' and on you go, indifferent to the consequences. What folly; Your friends would say, 'He is mad,' and truly you would prove yourself to be so. Ah, you say, 'There are no people so foolish as that.' No, perhaps not in temporal things; but, alas! there are thousands of such "fools" spiritually. How the devil laughs at such people! What chuckling they have over them down below!

My friend, will you stop? Will you give your soul a chance? Will you make a bit of time to think about your dying bed, and the judgment bar? Will you stop in your chase after riches, position, learning, pleasure? Will you pull yourself up, as a rational being ought, and face about, and look God and eternity in the face? Oh! will you? Would to God I could make you! would to God I could come and put my arms around you, and entreat you, with tears and prayers, to stop and think! If you will only stop and think, *you will be saved*. It is not in human nature to go into hell with the full realization of the danger. If you will not think now, remember, I beseech you, that you will have to spend eternity in thinking.

Oh, how wicked in the sight of angels, and all holy intelligences, thus to murder your soul for want of a little thought! Oh, how wicked to circumvent the purposes of God, and help the Devil to damn the world, when a little thought and consideration would have prevented it! Oh, what a *monster of wickedness you are* to be thus *indifferent*! What an example to set to all created beings! what a strengthening of the

hands of all the wicked ! What a vile murderer you are in the estimation of angels, and even of devils, for they can see the heinousness of your conduct, whether you see it or not !

You are worse than an infidel, for you are more inconsistent. He does profess not to believe in a God ; but you *profess to believe in one*, and yet take no notice of Him. He professes to believe there is no hell or heaven ; you profess to believe in both, and yet you are plunging down to hell ; your sin is more monstrous than infidelity. You are saying, ‘ I care for none of these things.’ I say, this indifference is the height of folly, and the extreme of wickedness. May God help you to see it ! HAVE YOU A SOUL ? A woman was very angry once when I asked her this. ‘ What do you mean ? ’ she said, I said, ‘ I mean what I say : HAVE YOU A SOUL ? ’ She said, ‘ Do you mean to insult me ? Of course I have a soul as much as you have.’ ‘ I am glad to hear it. Is it saved ? ’ ‘ Saved ? No ; I don’t know that it is.’ ‘ Then how monstrously inconsistent for you to be so offended at my asking if you had a soul, and in the next breath you confess, it is not saved. Do you not see what monstrous folly it is to profess to have a soul, and yet never to take one hour’s serious consideration to know how it is to be saved ? You had better believe you have no soul at all, you would be far less inconsistent and wicked.’

My friend, have you a soul ? Will you stand there and tell me you have, and, at the same time, that you have never taken any time to consider what is to become of it ; that you have never faced the great problems of this Book, nor asked yourself what you are

going to do in case of death; that you have no plan for Salvation, and yet you believe you have a soul! Surely the time past shall suffice for such folly. You will act like a rational being, you will face the fact of your soul's destiny, and settle the question whether you will be saved or lost for ever. Will you? I call on you in the name of reason, of God, of Christ, of eternity, to settle it, *whether you will have your soul saved or not*; and if you will, come, and let it be done to-night.



NEW LIFE

NEW LIFE.

JOHN iii. 3.—“*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”

WE meet with a great many people in meetings of this kind who seem to have a general notion of their obligation to serve God, and a desire to do so. They feel that they are not right—are not quite what they ought to be, and would like to be if they were going to die; and they desire to be so. They are sincere, so far as they go; but they seem to have no definite idea of that experience which is necessary in order to make them right; they do not understand how they are to be saved.

Nicodemus seems to have been one of this class; he seems to have come to the Saviour with these general sort of notions. I dare say he thought he was a pretty good man; but he wanted to be a better one. There was the same dissatisfaction, the same disquiet in his soul that there is in every human soul till it finds God, and which nothing else can ever satisfy; because God has made us for Himself, and until we find the end of our being we can never rest; we are like Noah's dove, wandering hither and thither and finding no rest for the soles of our feet. It was just so with Nicodemus. He wanted something. He had heard of this Teacher; nay, had probably heard Him speak, and felt that He was a teacher come from God; and like a great many

other Nicodemuses since, he felt the words of the Teacher to BE TRUE; but he had a great many "ifs" and "buts" about it. He wanted to hear more, and so sought a private interview, no doubt thinking that he could bring out his own personal difficulties, and get more light in that way; so he makes a sort of introduction to our Lord, and begins in a way which would lead us to think that he expected that Jesus would enter into an elaborate conversation as to the orderings and method of His outward life; but Jesus stopped him right in the middle of his introduction with a doctrine that utterly confounded him; it was so adverse to all his preconceived notions, and so utterly beyond any of his present conceptions. One can imagine him fairly gasping as he looks at this wonderful doctrine, for he seems to have comprehended its magnitude, its importance, and its definiteness a great deal better than many of the Nicodemuses of these days; but he stumbles at the difficulty, and begins immediately, as people do now, to ask, 'How can this be?' The Saviour does not retract, or explain away, or go one iota from what He has previously advanced. He not only does not weaken His assertion, but He strengthens it by a "Verily, verily." He says, 'Do not be surprised. I admit there are difficulties. You cannot understand, and I cannot explain *how* this great spiritual change is wrought; but I tell you it must take place both in you and in every other candidate for My kingdom.'

This text ought to be rendered, "Except ANY ONE be born again, he *cannot*"—mark the term; it is not "*shall not*," but "*cannot*"—"enter into the kingdom of God." This new birth is a necessity of the case, as

if the Saviour had said to Nicodemus, ‘ You are a purely
 ‘ natural man ; you live a merely natural life, actuated
 ‘ by natural instincts, hopes, and aspirations ; whereas
 ‘ My kingdom is a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM, and its subjects
 ‘ are spiritual people, actuated by holy motives, holy
 ‘ desires and purposes ; therefore it is indispensable
 ‘ that this great change should take place in you before
 ‘ you can become a member of My kingdom. You
 ‘ must be born again.’ And, in answer to the surprise
 of Nicodemus, He says, ‘ Marvel not, neither reject
 ‘ this doctrine because you cannot comprehend it, for
 ‘ you encounter quite as great mysteries every day of
 ‘ your life ; for instance, “ The wind bloweth where it
 ‘ “ listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst
 ‘ “ not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth,”
 ‘ This is a great mystery, yet you know the wind does
 ‘ blow because you see its results and you feel its
 ‘ power. It is just so with the operations of the Spirit ;
 ‘ we see its results and feel its power, and know that
 ‘ we are under its influence.’

It would seem that under the surprise there was
 lurking some repugnance in the mind of Nicodemus to
 this doctrine, which is so obnoxious to human pride,
 self-sufficiency, and morality. Nicodemus betrays his
 utter ignorance of spiritual truth by the question,
 “ How can a man be born when he is old ? ”

Now, mark, I want you who are anxious about your
 souls, to note this : the Saviour here lays down a
 DEFINITE EXPERIENCE, which He DECLARES ALL MUST
 PASS THROUGH ; no matter what a man may be, or what
 he may do, or what he may believe, if he have not
 this experience, “ he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of
 God.” And, oh ! how we see it illustrated every day

around us—people like Nicodemus, moral, amiable, and religious in their way, and yet have never been born again; and we know that they do not, as a matter of fact, enter the kingdom of God. They know nothing of that kingdom which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. They cannot enter the kingdom of God because this great internal change has never taken place in them. I want you, my friends, to mark this well. Don't let Satan tempt you, or anybody persuade you, to rest short of this new birth. You must remember that there is not a glorified spirit in heaven nor a sanctified saint on earth who has not passed through it. Some may have experienced it in childhood, and therefore not have a very distinct recollection of the time; but every saint *has* experienced it.

Well, then, just let us for a few minutes try to find out what the Saviour intended by this new birth. Evidently He meant the beginning of true spiritual life to the soul. He intimates that so great a change must take place in our souls as could only be illustrated by the great change which takes place in our bodies at our natural birth. I want you carefully to mark the terms used by the Saviour here, and also the figure. We cannot follow it out; but I will confine my remarks to its meaning. By the terms used, our Lord evidently signifies an *alteration, or change*, passing upon something which *before existed*. Mark, the Saviour does not say, "Except a man be born, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"—for everybody is born,—but "Except a man be born *again*." In another place this change is called "the regeneration" "of the Spirit"—mark, not generation, but

regeneration. The soul existed before ; but it is to be re-generated by the Holy Ghost—that is, the old soul is born into a new life. Again, this change is spoken of as being “renewed in the spirit of our minds.” The same idea, you see,—that what previously existed shall be re-newed, transformed, and changed in character. In another place this change is spoken of as having the “heart purified,” in another as having it circumcised, and in others as having it washed, cleansed, etc.: all terms, you perceive, showing that this new birth is not a new creation in the sense of having a new soul, or a new something apart from ourselves introduced into us, to live alongside the old unrenewed wicked heart till death, when I suppose, in such a case, one would have to go to hell and the other to heaven! No; neither the Saviour nor the Bible teaches any such nonsense, but they teach that this new birth is a renewal of the old soul, making the man himself a new creature in Christ Jesus; hence the figure used by our Lord truly illustrates His meaning, seeing that the natural birth is not a new creation, but the introduction of something previously created into a new life. Just so the soul, when it is born again, is introduced into a new life, into new relations with God and man, new duties, new obligations, new responsibilities, a new world! What a glorious experience to know that we have passed from death unto life, from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God! Then comes power to walk in the statutes of the King, and to enjoy the pleasures of the kingdom. People often say, ‘Religion will deprive me of all that has hitherto constituted the joy of my life.’ Yes; but the joy of your life will be

CHANGED; your appetites will be changed. Have you not known people in a severe sickness to lose their appetite for things of which they were previously very fond? Well, that is just what God does for the soul. He takes away the appetite for those things which have been their joy in their unconverted state, and gives them new tastes, new joys, new impulses, and new aims in life. Old things are passed away, and all things are become new.

But, further, I want to show the *necessity* for this great change—why the Saviour so emphatically insists on it; although surely the fact that He *does* insist on it ought to be sufficient. Seeing that man was the rebel, having broken the law and thereby excluded himself from the kingdom of God, it was for God to dictate the conditions on which He would receive him back. God has fixed these conditions, and no less than three times in a few verses in this chapter our Saviour has laid them down. It is useless to kick against them, or to ignore them. We can do so if we like, but that will not alter them. God will not depart from them in order to meet our obstinacy.

Nevertheless, as we observed at the beginning, this is not an arbitrary arrangement. God has always good reasons for what He does, and in this instance there is an indispensable *necessity* in the nature of the case. This necessity arises out of the fact that all hearts are depraved by nature, and therefore out of harmony with God and incapable of entering into the privileges and duties of His kingdom.

Does any man ask for proof of this depravity? We might cite the testimony of Scripture, and quote numbers of passages which directly or indirectly assert

that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. We might also refer to the history of our race—a history written in blood and watered by tears ; but we prefer to come to experience. What does your own heart say ? Ah, there is the difficulty. You readily admit that a portion of the race is depraved ; and if the Saviour had confined His declaration to the openly wicked and profane, you would admit its necessity. But when He declares that EVERY ONE must be born again or he cannot enter His kingdom, you perceive this declaration includes you, and those whom you love ; and your heart says, I was never a drunkard, or immoral, or profane ; I never wronged anybody. I have always led a good, respectable, moral life, therefore I don't see why I should be classed with the reprobates of creation, and be required to go through a change which may be very necessary for them.

My friends, it was to one of your class exactly that our Saviour declared this necessity. Nicodemus was respectable, and moral, and withal a religious man in his way, a master in Israel ; and yet Jesus assures him over and over again that neither he nor any one can enter His kingdom without this new birth.

You see this change is to take place in *the heart*, not merely in the life ; and your heart is as bad as anybody else's ! If you doubt this, just ask yourself a few simple questions. You say, I do none of these wicked things to which you refer. Perhaps not. But why ? Your circumstances have been more favourable. The restraints of Providence, such as kind friends, education, Christian influence, and other causes, have modified your outward life—not because your heart

is any better. But for these restraints you would have been as wicked as many around you.

But though you are not outwardly wicked, have you not sufficient evidence of the sinfulness of your heart in other directions? For instance: You are conscious that you have no true religion. You don't even profess to have. You practise none of the duties or exercises of religion. You have never truly repented of and forsaken sin. You don't truly pray and habitually read God's Word. You are not even striving to love God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself. No; you live in indifference towards God, and in the rejection of both His law and Gospel.

What further proof can you require of the depravity of your heart than this? But, further, you know, not only that you have no true religion, but also that there is much in your heart that is opposed to God. You entertain hard and dishonouring thoughts of God. Your heart often rebels against His government, in order to meet your own evil propensities; and your rebellious will often sets itself in open defiance of His purposes. You know that God commands you to repent and to forsake sin—asks for your heart and your love—and requires you to form your plans and purposes with respect to His will and glory. But you systematically ignore both, and form them with reference to your own ease, pleasure, gain, or ambition. With all your boasted morality, you have thought, and felt, and desired, and done many things for which your own heart has condemned you, and which you would not for the world confess before this assembly. I ask you why you have thus thought and acted

contrary to the dictates of your conscience. Because your heart is depraved, alienated from God, and committed to self and Satan.

Therefore, you see how this heart-depravity unfits you for the kingdom of God. The true service of God is obedience prompted by love. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" "The first and greatest commandment is this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." How can a man love God when his heart is estranged, and full of sin and rebellion and selfishness? Impossible!

Sinner, you hear the Bible and your conscience calling on you to love God. You feel that you ought, and perhaps you have tried, but you cannot. Your heart *will* love the world, pleasure, sin, business, anything but God. The moment you turn your thoughts towards God, instead of love and desire there springs up repugnance and dread. Why is this? Because your heart is wicked, and therefore it is contrary to its evil nature to love God. Before you can love Him, your wicked heart must be changed. And this is the reason why you cannot enter His kingdom except ye be born again.

Further, the natural unrenewed heart is incapable of entering into the enjoyments of the kingdom of God on earth or in heaven. Nothing seems to puzzle unsaved people more, with respect to the Salvation Army, than the happiness of our people. Sinners don't understand and cannot appreciate the joys of the spiritual kingdom; they are spiritually discerned; to the natural man they are foolishness, he cannot know them.

One of the chief of these enjoyments is knowing and loving God. To the wicked the very thought of God is misery. But the pure in heart see Him, have fellowship with Him, and rejoice in the light of His countenance. His smile is more to them than thousands of gold and silver.

Another of the joys of the kingdom is the communion of saints—the very sight of each other makes real saints happier; and interchange of thought, and feeling, and desire fills them with unspeakable joy. They realise that oneness with each other for which the Saviour prayed, “That they all may be one, as we are one.”

But nothing is more irksome to the unconverted than intercourse with real saints; in fact, they cannot endure it, and always run away from it when possible. Sinners find their happiness here in eating and drinking, reading novels, dress, business, going to concerts, theatres, etc., from which, to say the least, God is shut out. Unconverted people would be wretched without these and kindred occupations and amusements. But the kingdom of God provides occupations and joys of an entirely different character. Therefore, for the sinner to enter into these he must be born again.

Further, this depravity unfits man for the enjoyment of the kingdom of God on high. If the joys of heaven consisted of a continuation of the employments of earth, then sinners would be happy there. But heaven is a holy place, prepared for holy beings, whose employment will be to serve God continually: “They serve Him day and night in His temple.” Their happiness will consist in their perfect love and complete

obedience to His will. The multitude which John saw, who had on white robes—emblematical of the purity of their hearts—had been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Sinner, would you like to appear in such a place, surrounded by those beings, with your unchanged, selfish, worldly heart? Supposing God would let you enter, do you think you would feel at home there? Are you prepared for the enjoyments of heaven? No; verily, if you were admitted, you would seek the first opportunity to escape. The light of that glorious abode would be more intolerable to you than the darkness of hell itself. Why? Because your heart would be out of harmony with it all, and you would stand self-revealed before that glorious company.

Do you not see, then, how true are the Saviour's words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God?" Do you say, 'Well, I admit the truth of what you say, but what can I do? If I am thus depraved, and can only be fitted for the kingdom of God by this new birth, what can I do? Can I do anything to help myself?' Yes, you can. In this case the figure used by our Saviour is not a perfect illustration, as figures seldom are. Though you are, in one sense, dead in trespasses and sins, yet the Spirit of God has already breathed upon your soul, and He now waits for the response of your will in order that He may accomplish this great change in you. It is vain for you to sit there in INACTION, WAITING TO BE BORN. You must follow the directions of the Holy Spirit, in complying with the conditions on which alone the change can be wrought.

You say, 'You don't know the difficulties in my

case.' No, I don't; but I know this; that if you are WILLING, though you were possessed with a legion of devils, God is able and willing to cast them out, and to renew you in the spirit of your mind. I know that the whole legion of them cannot resist His power, if you will only fall at His feet and yield whatever may be the point of controversy between you and God. If you are willing to be born into the kingdom, God has pledged Himself to bring you in.

You say, 'I desire it; I want to be a new creature in Christ Jesus. I would like to be able to enter into the privileges and enjoyment of the kingdom; but there is one thing in the way.' Ah, that is the reason why many of you have been standing outside so long. Will you come to the point to-night, and trample that one thing under your feet? If you will, the strong arm of Omnipotence is reached out to you, and the Almighty hand will grasp you and plunge you into the flood, the all-cleansing flood of your Saviour's blood; and you shall know what it means to be born again, to become a new creature in Christ Jesus. May the Lord help you to yield just now! Amen.



MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

ROMANS ii, 4, 5, 6.—“ *Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds.*”

PAUL wrote some things which, as Peter, a fellow-Apostle, says, are “hard to be understood,” and which “many wrest” (misinterpret and misapply), “as they do also other Scriptures, to their own destruction,” and, alas! alas! to the destruction of others also. Perhaps no utterances of man have been more unfairly dealt with than those of Paul, odd paragraphs having been separated from the arguments or illustrations of which they form a part, and made to teach doctrines and dogmas which other parts of his writings show to be entirely at variance with both his spirit and design; in fact, whole systems of theology have been built on some of these isolated paragraphs, systems as repugnant to our innate perceptions of rectitude and benevolence as they are inimical to the character of God. Alas! these theories have been pressed on the minds of benevolent and thoughtful men as the true theory of Christianity, and, knowing no other, they have rejected it altogether and become infidels. Until theologians arrive at some settled consistent fundamental principle of interpretation, they can make the Bible teach anything; and

while they persist that it contradicts itself, they must expect it to be held up to ridicule and contempt. We must ever bear in mind that there can be no inconsistency or contradiction in the Divine mind : "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Consequently, when speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, the Apostles could not contradict themselves.

When I was fourteen years old, I rejected all theories about God and religion which contradicted my innate perceptions of right and wrong. I said, 'No; I will never believe any theory which represents that a course of procedure is good and benevolent in God which in man would be despicable and contemptible. I cannot receive it.' I could not then put it into this language, but I remember distinctly the feelings of my soul. I said, 'No; all that there is in me akin to goodness and truth God has put there, and I will never believe that what God has put in me contradicts what He has put into this Book. There must be a mistake somewhere.' And, thank God, I came to the Scriptures for myself, which I recommend you to do. Don't imagine that the repugnant views of the character of God which have been forced upon you by professed theologians will form any excuse for your rejection of this Book or of the Divine authority of it in the great day of account. God will say, Had you not the light for yourself?

You do not shut your natural eyes against the light of the sun, and permit yourself to be led about the world anywhere people choose to lead you. No; you open your eyes, and look where you are going! Why don't you open the eyes of your soul, and take in the light of the spiritual sun, that you may walk and not stumble? If

you refuse to do this, you will be condemned amongst those who love darkness rather than light. Don't imagine that these supposed contradictions will be an excuse for you at the judgment seat. It is not many weeks since a gentleman said to me, 'While you Christians are quarrelling, there's hope for us sinners. One teaches one thing and another another, till a poor fellow doesn't know what he is to believe.' Ah! that is a comfortable way to put it, down here; but when you get to the Bar of God, He will say to all such, 'Thou wicked and slothful servant, why didst thou not go to My Book for thyself, and be at the *trouble* to get to know My will?'

We ought to study this Book as a whole, especially the writings of this Apostle; and surely we should take that which is plain and unmistakable as a key to unlock and interpret that which at first sight is difficult and contradictory. Is not this the principle which prevails in all rightly constituted human courts? Are not all human documents judged and disposed of according to this rule? Is it not insisted that these shall be interpreted consistently with themselves and with the general scope and design of the writer? You say, 'Yes; and that is the only rational rule of interpretation.' If you were interested in a will which was in dispute, you would have a keen appreciation of the importance of this rule. Then, if this is necessary with respect to the writings of men of comparatively recent date, how much more is it necessary with respect to the writings of God—many of them having come down to us from ages back, and, notwithstanding all the care that has been taken in their preservation, subject to many changes of phraseology, thus requiring

in difficult passages the utmost care and skill, and yet not so much skill as *honesty*, in order to understand their meaning?

But, after all, there is very little in the Word of God which practically affects our salvation which is hard to be understood. The things that Paul wrote on *this subject* are plain enough, thank God; and this text is one of the *plainest* and most *unmistakable* in the whole Bible! Moreover, it is complete in itself, and it enunciates a great truth which underlies all God's dealings with our race. It shows most blessedly that aback of all this Apostle's reasoning about Jews and Gentiles, and the predestination of the former to special privileges, and then to special judgments for the abuse of them,—that aback of all this he had deep down in his soul the belief and realisation of this blessed and glorious truth, THAT ALL GOD'S DEALINGS WITH OUR RACE ARE MERCIFUL AND RESTORATIVE, and that in the case of the very worst of men God is doing all He can for their salvation—that He in no single instance consigns to wrath before He has truly and honestly tried to save. Bless the Lord, we ought to get up and sing a song of praise before we go any further. Poor sinner, don't think there is any eternal decree barring thy way back to pardon and peace—not a bit of it. Don't think there is any subtle, mysterious influence beating thee back, while God professedly is inviting thee near. Away with such blasphemy! Thou art welcome this very hour, this moment, however far thou hast travelled on the way to ruin. God has spared thee for this very purpose—to *bring thee to repentance*.

First, I want you to note that the Apostle assumes in this text that God is good to all men, even to those

who despise His goodness and perish. “Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee (*is intended to lead thee*) to “repentance ?” Moses, early in the world’s history, asked the Lord to show him His glory. Moses was one of God’s favourites, because he *chose to be*, because he loved and sought after God before anything else. When you forsake the riches of Egypt in all its phases, and choose rather to be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness or worldliness, you will be one of His favourites. Well, this favourite of God, when he got close to Him one day, said, “I beseech Thee show me Thy glory.” What did the Divine Being do ? Did He unveil the splendours of His person ? Oh ! no. Did He draw aside the curtain of His dwelling-place ? No. Did He summon to His side countless multitudes of created intelligencies who run to do His bidding ? No. Perhaps Moses expected something of this kind, for he was only a man ; but God said, “I will make all MY GOODNESS to pass before thee”—as though thus early He were intent on fixing it in the minds and hearts of His creatures that His GOODNESS was His greatest glory ! He is good to all. And although in an especial sense the Father and Protector of His own people, He is in a very important sense the benevolent Father of all mankind. As Paul said to the philosophers of Corinth, “For we are all His offspring.” He hateth nothing that His hands hath made. He is good. And, oh ! how this goodness has flown out from the very beginning ! How many orders of beings and how many myriads of beings His goodness has enriched,

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and will enrich, to all eternity, we cannot tell. We do know that it has peopled heaven with glorious, happy beings, and that it is trying to save and rescue from earth those who have fitted themselves to become vessels of destruction. We know that it flowed out to man in Eden, where the Father placed him in innocence and purity, and surrounded him with all possible facilities for temporal and spiritual happiness; and we know that the Fall did not even interrupt its flow, but that immediately the Divine plan for man's restoration and salvation was launched, and a way made back again to the Father's heart and home!

But, sinner, do you want any *proof* that God is good? Granted that there is a God, and that He is infinitely powerful and holy, which your very instincts tell you He is—I say, grant me these two premises, and your appearance here this afternoon is proof enough that He is good. If He had not been good, where would you have been? His holiness forcing Him to hate every speck of iniquity that ever showed itself upon your soul, and His power great enough to damn you in a moment—WHERE WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN? But YOU LIVE. Is not this proof enough that He is good?

There is a father yonder who has a bad, rebellious, prodigal boy. He began to trample on his commandments at twelve years of age, and has despised his goodness, wasted his money, and ruined, as far as he could, his father's influence and reputation; he has gone on till he is thirty-three, and there is that father, bearing, weeping, entreating, and promising still. You say, Do you want any further proof that the father is good? The very fact that that son is

not finally cast off, the fact that his father will hold any communication with him, proves of a truth that he is good. How much more in the case of the great benevolent and infinitely holy God? Sinner, you are here. *That* is enough proof that God is good.

Ah! good. Some of you have been living in utter neglect of Him, some of you perchance have been absolutely denying Him, others have been abusing Him, and yet here you are alive to-day, when, by a look, a volition, He could have sent you to the bottomless pit years ago!

Further, I want you to note that the Apostle *positively asserts* THAT THE END OR PURPOSE OF THIS GOODNESS IS MAN'S SALVATION.

"Despisest thou" (language implying rebuke, blame) "His goodness and long-suffering, which is "intended to lead thee to repentance?" Repentance here covers the whole of salvation, as it frequently does in the New Testament. That is, it is equivalent to saying, leadeth thee to salvation. In Scriptural language, when a man truly repents, he is saved. Oh! you say, 'but that cannot always be true, because I 'have been repenting a long time, and I am not saved.' Then yours is not *true* repentance. Oh! there is nothing will be shown up at the last day more than the oceans of crocodile tears that have been shed by professed penitents! making out God to be a liar, and throwing back the blame of people's damnation on Him. Do not be deceived. Your repentance is a spurious repentance, or it would long ago have led to your salvation. Jesus Christ says, the angels of God rejoice "over one sinner that repenteth." Why? Because they see in repentance an assurance of

salvation. God never left a truly repentant soul in the dark. He will bring it out into the light, Therefore the Apostle puts repentance for salvation, and he asserts that God tries to lead the WORST OF MEN to repentance. Look at the text, and see if I am mistaken. He says that the goodness of God is intended to lead;—whom? Those who despise the riches of His goodness, and longsuffering, and forbearance,—those, in short, who are heaping up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath. Those very men God's goodness is trying to save; but they frustrate His purposes, and turn the very means He uses to save them into a means of cursing. Sinner, do you see what He has spared you for—what His long suffering mercy desires and intends?

The Apostle refers here especially to two characteristics of God's goodness—*forbearance* and *long-suffering*. Forbearance: this looks like the *withholding* attitude of Divine mercy,—like a father who is going to chastise his child, but his forbearance pleads, and he holds back the rod. Here is Divine mercy holding back the long-deserved blow. And longsuffering seems to indicate the *waiting* attitude of Divine mercy. Not only holding back the blow, but holding it back a long time—waiting, waiting if perchance the sinner will repent and turn back to Him. “Behold I” (your God and Saviour) “stand at the door and knock.” Wonderful! Infinite! Incomprehensible! And how long has He been knocking at some of your hearts? Any other friend you would have got up and let in years ago, but it was ONLY JESUS! so you have kept Him out, some of you till your hair is grey! Oh, what longsuffering mercy! How long He has waited! Years

ago, under that godly minister whom you can never forget, you woke up to realise it. You looked at yourself. You contemplated the dark, guilty past, and you couldn't help saying,—

“Oh ! depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me ?”

The flood-tide of mercy was then at its ebb-flow. The minister said *Come*, and the Holy Spirit said *Come*; your own conscience said *Come*; Jesus said *Come*. But there was another preacher.

THE DEVIL ! He said, ‘Not now : a more convenient ‘season.’ And here you are to-day, with added years of guilt, added years of hardness and unbelief and rebellion, and added years of WRATH ! “Despisest thou,” O man, “the riches of His goodness ?” You have been depising them all this time. Mind, mind, there are bounds even to His patience. If He bears long and endures much, the stroke comes at last ; and the longer it is withheld the HEAVIER IT WILL FALL. “Wrath against the day of wrath.” Shall the past suffice thee, sinner ? Wilt thou listen and flee from the wrath to come ?

The Apostle asserts that this is the very end and purpose of God in sparing your life. Hence He says in another place, “those who fitted themselves to destruction as vessels of wrath, He endured with much longsuffering.” Oh ! what a wonderful thought ! but then, you see, God is *God*—that is the reason. You would not have borne with a fellow-creature a tithe of the time, nor to anything like the degree that He has borne with you ; but HE IS GOD, and there is no sounding the depths of His infinite compassion.

He knows what it will be to be lost. I often think of

that. Oh! it doesn't seem to me so wonderful, after all, that Jesus Christ should die, because He comprehended the depths of the unutterable desolation to which sinners were going. He realised the bitter cup they would have to drain, and so He took it and tried to save them from it. But mind, a sorer punishment awaits those who depise such love! And, oh! it seems as though some people were making haste and trying their best to *treasure up* wrath, as the Apostle says, as though there would not be enough, against the day of wrath.

Sinner, remember for every sin there is so much wrath. You can label it off as surely as you do the profits of your day's business. Every day's forbearance, so much more wrath. You are heaping it up, treasuring it up. It is hovering over the path you tread like some great towering black mountain. Just a puff of God's breath, or a touch of His finger, and it will come down and overwhelm you, as the waters did Pharaoh and his host. You are making it higher, denser, blacker, every day you live. You know it is *true*. You have had a foretaste of it already. The rumblings of its hidden fires have scathed your soul, and darkened your mind, and blighted your happiness, even now while you only catch the outer foam of its angry billows! Loving mercy is holding it off, but it has done enough already to show you what it *WILL BE* when it overwhelms you for ever. Will you give up despising the riches of His goodness? Will you now begin to flee from the wrath to come? The Lord help you.

Further, I want you to note that GOD'S PURPOSE IS FRUSTRATED CONTINUALLY by impenitent sinners. Paul

declares this as unmistakably as that God tries to save them. This idea shocks some people's notions of the Divine sovereignty. I cannot help that. Here it is as plain as A B C: "Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; *but* after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." And not only is it here, but in a score of other texts of Paul's writing. The Apostle had a profound sense of the Divine sovereignty, which shows itself all through his epistles; but we see from such passages as these that he had no idea of it which was the least incompatible with man's entire free agency. Here, and in many other places, he shows that his idea of God's sovereignty is, that it asserts itself in legislating how man ought to act and in punishing him for disobedience, and not in divesting him of his *freedom* in order to *prevent* disobedience. Paul carefully discriminates between the physical and moral sovereignty of God, a distinction which many theologians disregard, and thus are guilty of confounding things that differ, and of traducing the Divine character.

Both Paul and all the inspired writers deplore again and again the fact that men do FRUSTRATE THE LOVING PURPOSES of God, and thus bring upon themselves destruction. Did not the Jews? What did Jesus Christ mean when He wept over Jerusalem, and said, "Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day?" Away with a theology that makes that out to be hypocrisy! It was the heart's sincerity of the Son of God, and He meant every word He said. What more could He have done to make them or us believe that He was sincere? He wept, and groaned, and spread His hands over the

rebellious people, and said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Ye hard-hearted, stubborn, and rebellious, as Stephen said of them, "as your fathers did, so do ye; ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." *That* was the secret of their destruction, and, alas! they treasured up wrath both for this world and the next, such as never fell on any other people.

Alas! men do frustrate God's purposes. We see it all around us. Now God's desire is that all men should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth—that those very men who despise Him should be saved and come to repentance. But all these are *not* saved. Then God's purpose is frustrated in their case, is it not? Some of you confess that you are not saved. Then, my friends, the purpose of God's goodness is not answered in your case. Whose fault is it? Dare you look Him in the face and charge Him with the murder of your soul? Whose fault, I demand, will it be if you are lost? If you never hear anything more than you have heard here this afternoon, you will have no excuse. Your conscience, I know, says "Amen" to what I am saying. God's voice thunders "Amen" in the ears of your guilty soul. You are not saved. Why? Because you are *despising the riches of His goodness*, forbearance, and longsuffering. Because you are throwing back the offer of His mercy in His face, and saying, 'No, no, I love my sins; I will have my 'ungodly pleasures; I will live on in my rebellion; I 'will not listen; I will be like those disobedient, 'rebellious Jews: I will not know the things that 'make for my peace.' Very well, my friend; if you

will not let God make you a vessel of His mercy in which to magnify the riches of His goodness and salvation, you will by this perverseness *fit yourself* to be a vessel of destruction, and, as such, God will have no alternative but, as our text says, to give you over to the “revelation of the *righteous* judgment of God, who will render to *every* man according to his deeds.”

You see, God will not put you out of being to oblige you, and to save you from the consequences of your wilful rebellion. You exist. You *must* exist. At the judgment day you will exist, and you will exist for ever! God will have to do *something with you*; and seeing that you would not let Him wash, and sanctify, and glorify you, He has no option but to leave you in your filth, to curse you, and put you in the scavenging house of His universe with the Devil and his angels!

You say, ‘Stop, stop, I am not despising His goodness.’ Are you not? What is it to despise anything? It means treating it with contempt, neglecting it. It does not mean saying bad words about it; it does not mean blaspheming God. I should hope none of you are bad enough for that. It does not mean throwing it absolutely back and telling Him in so many words that you will not have Him to reign over you. Oh! no; it means treating Him with contempt, and His salvation as a light thing. You are doing this, and some of you have been doing it for long rebellious years. If you had some money in a certain bank, and you heard that it was in a shaky condition, what a hurry you would be in to secure your treasure! You would not lose a moment. You would be investigating, and inquiring, and running to the bank to secure your money. You would not treat *that* with contempt;

you would not despise *the opportunity of* SECURING IT. why? Because you deem your money an important thing. Now, if you valued the mercy and love of God for your poor soul, you would deem that an important thing, and you would not neglect it. Mind, it is written that all those who forget, or neglect God, shall be turned into hell!

My friend, despisest thou the riches of His goodness? Will you give up despising Him? Will you come to His feet this afternoon? Will you say, 'It is enough, Lord'? Oh! if I were to stand here till to-morrow afternoon, I could occupy the time in telling you of awful cases that have come under my own observation, of people who have despised His goodness. There is a day coming when God says, "I will say, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." *Now* is the accepted time.

When I was holding services in P——, a man who kept a public-house, came to a meeting, and was deeply affected. Some of the friends gathered round him, and tried to persuade him to stop to the prayer-meeting. He had been convicted many a time before. He knew all about it, and he knew the soul-ruining traffic in which he was engaged. God pulled him up and arrested him once more—made him think, and feel, and tremble. Friends said, 'Stop, and give up your business, and give yourself to God;' but he shook his head, and went away. He said, 'No, not this time.' He despised! He died the next Thursday, raving mad, without a ray of hope. He despised the riches of His goodness.

I was just getting up to speak in a large theatre, when a Bible-woman at work in the town said, 'I want

‘to tell you something. There was a woman hearing ‘you last Sunday who was deeply affected. She wept ‘and trembled, and we tried to persuade her to give her ‘heart to God. She said she couldn’t then, but she ‘would come another time. She died on Tuesday ‘without hope, and was buried on Friday.’ She despised His goodness.

At Whitechapel one day I had been speaking, and there was a woman who very much impressed me. I went to her and besought her. She said, ‘Yes, I ‘know it’s all true. I have known it for years.’ I said, ‘How dare you risk putting it off?’ She said, ‘I can’t speak of it to-night,’ treating it as if it were a matter of no consequence ; ‘I will come another time.’ I followed her right into the draught of the door, for I felt my heart go out after her. I showed her the danger of delay. She said, ‘I will come at the close ‘of the meeting on Tuesday.’ On the following Thursday she was buried, and died without hope. She neglected, despised the riches of His goodness.

Another case. A man in the ironworks had been at one of the services at Portsmouth. He was working one day, when a massive piece of iron fell on him, but did not kill him on the spot. As the men carried him away, he observed, ‘The lady said trouble was ahead ; ‘now it has come.’ I had been speaking from the text, ‘He, that being often reprovèd hardeneth his ‘neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without ‘remedy.’

One of our men at Whitechapel used to go to a particular druggist’s to get prescribed for when not well, and he used always to warn the doctor about his soul, whose invariable reply was, ‘Oh ! never fear. I

‘shall be in time. I shall send for you when I am ‘dying.’ One day he fell down in his surgery, and never spoke again. He neglected, he despised the riches of His goodness.

I could tell you numbers of such stories, alas ! Men do fill up, in these days, the measure of their iniquity. They do put the last drop into the cup, and God says, “It is enough.” It is not always by an outward or manifest act that the cup of rebellion is filled ; it is often done in secret. Those Jews little thought they were filling it by neglecting and despising the Nazarene. You may think you are only neglecting the entreaties of a little woman, and yet before next Sunday you may be in hell. Every time I hear of such things, I say, ‘I will be clear of the blood of ‘souls. I don’t care what people say of me ; I will ‘never speak to sinners so that one man or woman in ‘my audience can stand up and say, ‘You might have ‘warned me more faithfully, told me more plainly than ‘you did.’ I would rather die than that should be ‘the case.’

Sinner, what will you do ? Mind, Paul says, “or treasurest up to *thyself* wrath against the day of wrath.” It is not God who treasures it up. It will be God’s wrath against your sins ; but you, and you alone, will be responsible for its coming on *you*. You need not inherit it, for another has borne it for you, if you would only accept Him as your Sacrifice and your Saviour. Will you deliberately reject His way of escape, and in spite of all His goodness make good your claim to everlasting wrath ? Will no mercy, no longsuffering, no past experience, no forebodings of

conscience, no shadows of the pit, bring you to repentance?

Will you despise any longer, or will you YIELD NOW? Will you give up? Will you go down at His feet? Will you turn away from sin and evil companions, your old associations, and come right to the foot of the cross, go down at His feet and say, 'Lord Jesus, I WILL BE THY DISCIPLE?'



HALTING BETWEEN TWO
OPINIONS.

HALTING BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS.

1 KINGS xviii. 21.—“*And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, fo'low Him: but if Baal, then follow Him. And the people answered him not a word.*”

You who are familiar with this history will remember that Ahab was one of the worst kings that ever sat on the throne of Israel. He was the son and the grandson of idolatrous kings; and for fear he would not be able to carry out his wicked intentions sufficiently by himself, he married a heathenish and idolatrous woman, and by her help he managed to spread the apostasy almost over the entire nation of Israel. We do not wonder we read in 2 Kings xvii. 33, that they feared the Lord and *served* their own gods, for these were poor heathen colonists from Assyria. But Israel was a nation professedly worshipping Jehovah. And although no doubt Ahab and his wife intended utterly to subvert the worship of the true God, and to put that of Baal in its place; they could not, they dare not aim to do this all at once, and so they supplemented the worship of God by the worship of Baal. They built a house for Baal, planted a grove, and established his worship alongside the worship of the God of Israel, and they succeeded in inducing the majority of the nation to follow them.

Alas! alas! this is generally the case when those in high places give their influence on the wrong side

and against God. What an awful reckoning-day is coming for wicked kings and rulers, in fact for all people in places of influence and authority who use it against God! It will be bad enough for a man to have to answer for the damnation of his own soul; but, oh! what will it be to have to answer for the damnation of thousands of others? You who are influencing others—your wives, your children, your husbands, your friends, your servants, those who live in the same house with you—there is a reckoning-day coming, and an awful reckoning-day it will be.

Well, this king and queen succeeded in instituting this heathen religion in Israel; they set up this idol Baal alongside the temple of the God of Israel, and induced nearly the whole nation to bow down to it. They had got idolatry, as they thought, firmly established, and were eating and drinking and making merry over the conquest, when down drops Elijah on the scene, as though he had fallen from heaven. This man, dressed in goat's hair, with a leather girdle about him, a true, courageous prophet of the Lord of hosts, faces Ahab as none but one sent of God dare, and he says, "As the Lord liveth" mark the allusion, your Baal is a dead God—"their shall be neither dew nor rain in Israel these years, but according to my word;" "and I stake the truth of my testimony on 'His life; if He lives, it shall be accomplished;" and then he disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. The Lord had provided a hiding place for His servant. He sends him to the brook Cherith, there to be fed by a miracle, while He comes out of His place to chastise this idolatrous, backsliding, rebellious people. Perhaps the Lord wished to spare Elijah the scenes he would

have had to witness, or He foresaw that this grim tyrant would be everlastingly harassing him and trying to slay him. Whichever way it was, God hid him; but when the famine began to make its appearance, then they began to search for Elijah.

I wonder what Ahab wanted with Elijah. His guilty conscience told him that that man had the key of the clouds, that that man was nearly associated with this dread calamity, and so he sends out messengers to find him—as Obadiah tells Elijah, “there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.”

But he could not find him. The man whom God hides, the Devil will never find, until God gives him permission, and then he will not be able to touch a hair of his head. How safe are they who are in the keeping of Elijah’s God! How independent they are of men’s opinions and threatenings! The famine spreads desolation all over the land, until there is great scarcity of food for man and beast, and the king sends Obadiah to find out the little rivulets that might be left, or the springs that are not dried up, so as if possible to find a little green stuff for the cattle; and as Obadiah proceeds on his way, Elijah meets him, and says, “Go, tell thy Lord, Behold, Elijah is here.” And Obadiah replies, “Thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me.”

But Elijah gives him the assurance he needed. “As

the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day."

Here is courage—the true courage of one whom God has sent. "I am not afraid of thy master ; I am not afraid of his dungeons or his blocks. I am going to show myself to him." He says, moreover, "Go and tell him Elijah is here"—not that Elijah is coming, but *here*—'if He wants me, he can come and find me. I shall not run away for fear of him ;' and so Obadiah goes and tells Ahab. What was it that drove Ahab to meet Elijah ? It might be he was impelled by hope ; it might be he was driven by fear ; but he had to go and meet him. The famine had brought things to a climax. He must meet with this man of God. He must try either to wrench this power from him by threatening, or he must persuade and entreat him. He goes to meet him. Can you not imagine you see them—the one the Devil's representative, the other the representative of the God of Israel ? The moment Ahab's eyes fall on Elijah, he begins with a false accusation—"Art thou he that troubleth Israel ?" It is always so with unrepenting, rebellious sinners. They charge the consequences of their sins upon God's faithful servants who are sent to rebuke and reprove them ; they say, "Oh ! let me alone. You are always foretelling evil things. You are always denouncing people. You are a troubler of Israel." But Elijah returns the charge, and says, "I have not troubled Israel ; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." He puts the controversy on its true footing ; he traces the calamity to its real source—their idolatry, backsliding,

and rebellion. There he stands uttering the truth with all the courage and boldness of a lion, because he feels he has the signet of the King of kings to his utterance. "It is thou and thy father's house that have troubled Israel;" and then he assumes the part of the king, turns the tables upon him, and commands him 'Now go.' Oh! the authority which the possession of the Spirit of God gives to His servant, and what he dares do with that Spirit in him! Now, he says, "Send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal."

'What impudence!' Ahab might have said. 'Do you suppose I am going to gather the prophets of my favourite god? Who are you that you should command this?' But there is not a word of it. Poor trembling coward! his conscience echoed back the accusation of Elijah. He knew he was guilty, and that their sins and their iniquities were the cause of this visitation, and he wanted rain. He wanted the ground softened and made fruitful; he wanted crops for his household, and people, and cattle, and he dared not deny Elijah's word or resist his authority. So he went and obeyed, and he gathered the backsliding nation together on the sides of Carmel. There was no building in Israel large enough to have contained that vast assembly. When thus gathered, Elijah comes and stands in the midst of them, and says. "How long halt ye?" There they were, that vast multitude, vacillating, halting between the service of God on the one hand and the service of Baal on the other. Their king and queen, the favours of the court, and perhaps a great many of their earthly advantages and possessions, depended on their choice. They were looking at Baal on the left

hand, and at the claims of the God of Israel on the right; and just as they were swaying to and fro like a field of corn in the wind, Elijah cries, ‘Now then, “choose ye whom ye will serve.” . . . “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” I demand a decision. I demand a settlement of this controversy.’

I just want you to notice one or two things in the state here depicted as typical of the condition of many here to-day. Look at what is implied in halting, because it is equally applicable to you as to idolatrous Israel. What does it mean, this halting between the service of God and of Baal, or the service of God and of anything else—self, the world, or Satan in any form he may assume? It means to hesitate in any course of conduct which we have been pursuing; to look at the reasons on the right hand and on the left; to debate in our minds the wisdom or rightness of two courses of conduct, and to compare them one with the other.

Now these Israelites were called on to decide between the claims of God and the claims of Baal. *You* are called on to decide between the claims of God as established and put forth in the death of His Son, and the service of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, which is your Baal. And as Elijah came and demanded of these people to whom he had previously ministered and whose prophet he was, so I come and demand in the name of the Lord God of Elijah from you who have received my messages during the last three months, whom the Spirit of God has made to look at them and ponder them—I demand of you a settlement of this controversy. Now, “how long halt ye?” Mind, I

am not speaking figuratively—God forbid. If I did not believe that I have as truly brought God's messages to you as Elijah did to the Jews, I should never have stood here. I fear—nay, I expect—that the salvation of some souls depends on the way they decide with respect to the message this afternoon. Oh, may God the Spirit help you to decide the right way!

To help you to this decision, I want you to note, first, that there is a sense in which we *never halt*—never stand still. In fact, there is a sense in which nothing stands still. But this is specially true of the world of mind and spirit. Once launched into being, sinner, you never stand still. You must increase, grow bigger in the capacity and enjoyment of good, or in the capacity for and realisation of evil for ever and ever. It is a beautiful thought to the righteous, that, once launched on the wave of everlasting progress, we shall stand still no more, but go on growing, and growing, and growing, until, as the Saviour said, we shall become as gods in our capacity for holiness and bliss for ever. We know not indeed what we shall be. God Himself could not explain it, but we shall be like Him. Oh, how beautiful! It is worth holding on for, worth suffering for, worth fighting for, worth dying for. This path of eternal progress once gained, if you will but hold fast and endure to the end of this mortal strife, on you go for ever!

But, oh! it is an awful thought for the sinner. It is equally true of you. You will have to go on in spite of yourself. You will have to grow bigger in sin and likeness to the Devil. Ah! sinner, stop and think how true this has been of you **IN THE PAST**. Look back at

yourself when you were a little boy of ten years old. 'Ah!' you say, 'I was a naughty boy then.' Very likely; but if anyone had told you that in five or ten years' time you would have been as big a sinner as you are to-day, what would you have said? *Oh! how you have grown!* How the Devil congratulates himself on your rapid and awful progress! You never thought you would get so big in evil. You never thought you would be such a sinner. Then reasoning by analogy from the past to the future—thus you must grow for ever. There is no stopping-place for you. Oh yes, THERE IS ONE, thank God. There was one for these Israelites, though they had entered on the downward path of backsliding, rebellion, and idolatry, and they would have gone on to utter destruction; but, bless His name, in His beneficence He said, "I will not let them go right over the boundary-line without one effort." He steps down from heaven to earth on to the top of Carmel, and puts His hand on them, and says, "Halt! stand still! listen! think! reflect!" and by the mouth of Elijah He made them consider. Then, when He had convinced them, He said, 'How long will you be before you settle on the right side—for Me, for righteousness, for salvation, for heaven? How long halt ye?'

Ah! there is one stopping-place for you, and only one. His infinite love could not let you go down to everlasting damnation without giving you a chance, and so He reared the cross, and stretched on it that broken, bleeding Victim, and *there* is the stopping-place for every poor sinner. And now, as Elijah called to those Jews from Mount Carmel, God calls you from *Calvary*, and says, "Man, stop! halt in your downward course!" and from the broken, bleeding body of His

Son He cries aloud to you, "Turn ye, turn ye ; for why will ye die ? Come unto Me and live."

There is, then, *one* stopping-place ; but if you get finally past that, there is no more stopping for you for ever. The very law of your being will force you on and force you down. There will never come a time when you can turn round and say, ' Well, now, I think I'm bad enough. I think I have gone far enough in the practice of iniquity and rebellion against God. I think I shall turn round now and stop '—*never*, you will have to go on growing in the capacity for evil, and enduring the consequence of evil, till you become a very devil ! You can never stop any more. Is it not true ? Does not your reason tell you it is true ? Does not your conscience tell you it is true ? Does not the Spirit of God thunder in your ears—" Amen ? " You *know* it is true—no more stopping !

Oh ! my sinful friend—you who are halting, you to whom the voice of God is raised in your wild career, stop and listen. What are you going to do this afternoon ? How long halt ye ? Will you settle this controversy on the right side, and, coming out of the downward path, start on the everlasting course of growth in righteousness and blessing for ever, *or will y u go on halting until* GOD SETTLES THE CONTROVERSY FOR YOU ? What will you do ? How long halt ye ?

I want you to note, *secondly*, that the *fact that you halt proves that God has put His hand upon you.*

The Devil never lets men halt if he can help it. That is the last thing he would ever think of doing. He keeps them so fully occupied, and so on the drive for the things of the world and of the flesh, that they have not time to halt. You can hardly get them to listen

to you a minute together. He says, 'If I let them halt, I'm done for. If I let them listen and take in the messages that woman is giving, they may be saved;' and so he pushes in business, pleasure, family, consequences, costs, or anything at hand. You know he has tried to keep some of you away with all his might. You halted up to the coming in at the door—whether you should come in or no; but the Spirit of God had got hold of you. And you know that as fast as I am pushing in truth at one ear, he is pushing it out at the other, with his infernal reasonings. He never lets men halt. You would NEVER HAVE PULLED UP A SINGLE MOMENT on your way to perdition, if the great Almighty God had not come down and pulled you up. It is not in me. Don't give me the credit. It is not in this book; it is not in heaven; it is not in earth; it is not in hell. It is not in all the angels of God to make a sinner halt—NOTHING BUT THE HOLY GHOST could do this. HE has pulled you up. He has faced you about. He has made you stop. He has startled and alarmed you. It is God, and God alone, who has done it! Therefore, I beseech you—MIND. Alas! sinners deal with us and with our truth as if it were a fiction. All that we can do, our very tears and entreaties, they treat as if it were a drama. They will not hear; they will not believe. They would not when He sent the Son Himself, and they will not when He sends His Elijahs, His messengers; but, oh! my friend, my soul for yours, there is an hour coming when you *will* know that a prophet has been amongst you. There is an hour coming when you *will* know it was God who pulled you up in this hall, and that you had a chance for your soul. As the Lord God of Elijah liveth, you

shall know that it was He, whatever you say now. Oh that He may help you to know it in this your day of visitation! Oh that you may know it, and listen and submit, and get saved! Then the end will be answered, and we shall have such a shout when we get to glory. But if you forget everything else, don't forget that it is God who is crying, "How long halt ye?"

Man, mind how you treat Him; if you insult Him and throw back His invitation, and settle the wrong way, in all probability you will never stop any more, but you will drive harder and harder *down to hell!*

I believe it is certain of some of you, *unless you settle at once to be saved*. Then how long halt ye? How long will you risk damnation?

Then ask yourself, *How* has God stopped you, and *why* have you halted? Oh! He has opened your eyes, and you are like Balaam's ass—you dare not go forward. You would fain, but you dare not. There is a drawn sword in the way. God has opened your eyes. He has made you see the horrors of a guilty soul upon a dying bed. You see it ahead of you. He has uncovered the pit, and you have had a look down. He shows what before you were blind to and could not see. You got up and shook yourself, and said, "It is a nightmare;" but, no, it was God uncovering the pit. He has made you look in. He has opened your ears, and the air has been sonorous with sounds from other worlds: over and over again, the dying exhortations and warnings of that Christian father, and the last beseeching entreaty of that sainted mother, and the little childish accents of that floweret that He took from your hearth. You have heard it by night and by

day, and you have shaken yourself, and said, 'I will not hear it,' but it has come again and again. Why? Because HE HAS OPENED YOUR EARS. Six months ago you did not hear it. For years it has been drowned with the din and strife of outer life, and you have plugged your ears that you should not hear. But God has opened them, and made you hear. Ah! some of you have heard the dying wailings of doomed companions. You know where they are. You know how far you went with them in the downward track, and where you had to part, and you know how they went over the brink. Now God has met you here. It has not been my poor words. It has not been anything you have read. It has not been any friends you have met. It is the Holy Ghost—God—who has opened your ears. How much longer, man, halt ye? Will nothing but the flames of hell do?

Then I want to note, lastly, that the FURTHER YOU GO THE FASTER, and the less possibility there is of your stopping. Like a stone downhill the momentum of the past will push you on in spite of yourself when you get near the bottom. The weight of the guilty deeds of the past will come behind you like an incensed rider, pushing you down, down, down; and the lower you go, and the further you go, the faster you go. Oh! my young friends, my dear lads, listen. There is many an old man here would say, "Amen," if he dare. He would say, 'It is true, my lad. You get out of the way of destruction.' Then come to the cross early; say, "The Lord, He is God, and I will serve Him." Sinner, every day you live you are heaping up the guilty deeds of the past to crush you lower and lower, till you get into the pit that

has no bottom. Don't believe the Devil. Don't believe his agents. Don't believe evil books. Don't read them. Don't have anything to do with anything that *lessens sin in your estimation*, and makes it look a trifling thing. Keep out of its rapids. It leads down to the chambers of death—death, everlasting death. My friend, will you stop this afternoon? The black flag of God's vengeance is waving over you night and day while you are out of the path that leads to life. Out of Christ, He is a consuming fire. Oh! I know the namby-pamby religionists of this day have made Him into a God like themselves, winking at iniquity; but He will show them in that day that to all iniquity He is still a consuming fire. He will have NOTHING TO DO WITH SIN, but will put it into the charnel-house which He has prepared for the corrupt of His universe. He is a pure and a holy God. The flood of His wrath is coming, and if you don't make haste it will overwhelm you for ever, and, oh! the bell of your doom may ring any moment.

How little those people in Percy Street, hard by, knew what was in store for them! That gentleman walking up Percy Street little expected that his doom was going to be pronounced in a moment. How little those people in the railway carriage, when the trains clashed, expected that, in one instant, when they looked not for it, their doom would be fixed! My friends, how long halt ye.

And just remember one more thought, that the halting of the soul is not like the halting of the body, in this respect—really and truly you never stand still. Though God has pulled you up in the way to destruction, and made you listen, and is arguing with you, and you,

as it were, stand thinking and considering which way you shall go, you are going, going, going, all the time. Oh ! it would be well for some of you to look back and think. It does people good to stop and realise how OLD THEY ARE, and think when God, first pulled them up, and how long it is since they began to halt. Angels are frightened to look at it. Devils are glad to look at it : and if you look at it, perhaps you will get frightened like the angels. How long ?—methinks the angel is sounding it over this congregation this afternoon—HOW LONG halt ye ? In a physical halting, as at the junction of two roads, for instance, a man may stand and argue which he shall take, but while he does so he is making no progress on either. He is not going in the wrong direction, and thus going further away from the right ; he is simply standing still. But it is not so spiritually—would God it were, I was going to say ; it would not be so serious ; but while you are halting spiritually, you are being hurried on as fast to destruction as ever.

TIME is carrying you on. You are like a man in a boat on a placid stream, at the end of which the rapids are falling. You lie on your oars, and the boat is gliding down so gently that you do not perceive the motion, and you are saying all the time, “ Shall I pull up the stream or down ? ” and the flowers are blooming on the banks, and it may be gay companions are calling to you, and you are whistling and singing, and it is like a May-day as you glide down ; but you are going down, down all the while, and the rapids are just below. Ah ! there is many a poor soul drifting to damnation thus. There is many a poor soul allows itself just carelessly to drift down to the rapids of

eternal death that never meant it. Oh! there are some old men in this hall, and old women, who have been drifting, drifting, drifting, till they are nearly gone; and there are some young ones, too, who, perchance, are just as near the rapids, for, in this race, it does not go by age. They are simply sitting on their oars, drifting. "Oh!" they say, "I don't intend to go down. Not likely, ME! I had a Christian father and a praying mother, and I have been hearing sermons all my life. Me! not likely. I don't intend to go down. I shall turn round and pull, by-and-by, in the right direction;" and while the words are in his mouth he is on the rapids—an accident, a fever, the breaking of a blood-vessel, or he drops down of heart disease, and he is gone, and his friends lift up their hands in horror and say, "Why, have you not heard the news?" "What news?" "Mr. So-and-so was found dead in his bed yesterday morning;" or, "Mr. So-and-so was walking down Percy Street, and there was an explosion, and all I saw of him was that he was lifted some fourteen feet in the air, and he fell down speechless—dead." Don't such cases reach us by almost every post? Don't the newspapers chronicle them almost every day and hour? These poor souls were in the rapids, and before they knew it they were gone.

Now, how long—HOW LONG? The Lord help you to turn the prow of your boat this afternoon, and take to your oars while there is a chance. The Lord help you to turn right round, not to Carmel but to Calvary, and go down at His bleeding feet and give yourself to Him. Leave the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and commit yourself to Him who died for you, and who has a right to every particle of your body and soul. Come along.

Here is the stopping-place—THE CROSS. You have not got past it yet, thank God. You might have gone past it, but He is still crying, "Come ; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Will you come and drink ? Amen.



A TRUE AND A FALSE
FAITH.

A TRUE AND A FALSE FAITH.

GALATIANS v. 6.—“*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*”

JAMES ii. 20.—“*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*”

ROMANS iii. 31.—“*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.*”

YOU are aware my subject this afternoon is to be the difference between a true and a false faith, and, oh! lift up your hearts to God for the light and power of the Holy Spirit. I feel intensely the importance of the subject; for I cannot help fearing that there is comparatively little of the real life of faith notwithstanding that there is so much talk and writing and preaching about faith. I am afraid that faith is awfully misunderstood, and I *know* that it is vilely misrepresented. These convictions have been forced upon me by actual contact with the people. I believe that multitudes upon multitudes are deceived on this vital point; and, God knows, I do not say this without realising the terrible import of my words. Pamphlets and tracts are often sent to me which I look through for the sake of the senders, but frequently they make my blood run cold, and I cry, ‘Lord, it is time for Thee to work; for not only are the righteous perishing, but *righteousness itself seems to be perishing*, and these blind guides seem to be making haste to extinguish the last faint barriers between right and wrong, and to

set open the flood-gates of Antinomianism and iniquity.' "Whom the gods intend to destroy, they first deceive;" and certainly Satan seems to have succeeded in deceiving many who pass for the elect, that through them he may drown the people in deception and perdition.

Well, I have prayed for ten years especially that God would raise up a people who would unfurl once more the standard of practical holiness, and show what GOD'S RELIGION REALLY IS. Everybody in these days is setting up to be a theologian. We get the most weak and contemptible contradictions and interpretations of Scripture possible to imagine.

I have often felt almost in despair as I have seen how the enemy has got over to his side the very strongholds of the Church, and turned the weapons of God's warfare to serve his own purposes. How I have seen him dispensing the untempered mortar, until its slime is everywhere! You cannot take up a book or a periodical but the grossest Antinomianism meets you clothed in a new dress. It is time somebody spoke out, and, thank God, seeing that His professing people will not, He is raising up a people from the slums to come out and tell the world that God is not dead, and that justice and judgement are still the habitation of His throne; that He still can save His people FROM THEIR SINS.

It was meeting with numbers of deceived people that first led me to consider saving faith as a separate subject. On one occasion, when I was walking down a large music hall, after a service, a respectable woman grasped my hand and said, "Oh! Mrs. Booth, tell me where I am wrong. I believe all that you have

been saying. I have believed it for years, and I pray, and strive, and believe, and yet I am not saved. I am just as big a SLAVE TO MY SINS AS ANYBODY ELSE." I shall never forget the light that seemed to strike from heaven as that woman spoke. I said, "O Lord! here is a specimen of thousands. Show me where is the missing link. Give me Thy message of truth on this point, and I will give it to them." And I believe God did give it to me, and has helped me to show to thousands since then what *is* true saving faith.

We will now try to show it to you; and if there is a thought in our minds not of His conception, may He blot it out! and what *is* of His conception, oh, may He give you light, and willingness, and confidence, and humility to receive, and thus may we all be blessed together!

I am going to speak of faith this afternoon in the evangelical or SAVING SENSE—not faith as used sometimes to denote the whole of Christianity, or to represent a system of truth, but faith when it is used to set forth that act of the soul which translates it out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God—that living, powerful, transforming principle in the soul of the believer which enables him to live in obedience to God—the faith that SAVES.

Now, WHAT IS THIS FAITH? God help us, because on this hinges our salvation or damnation; for He who was the embodiment of truth has said, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." They are not my words, therefore I dare not mince them.

Then, what is this faith?

1st. We will note one or two things which it is *not*.

And here you will see some of the great delusions of the Church in the present day.

(1) It is *not* a mere mental perception of, or conviction of, the truth. There may be this and not one atom of saving faith. Saving faith is not an intellectual perception of the truth. "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" and "circumcision availeth nothing, nor uncircumcision; but faith that *worketh by love*." "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we *establish the law*."

Now there are tens of thousands of merely intellectual believers in this country,—just as your son has been trained in the belief, that is, *the reception into his mind*—of certain facts in astronomy. He has been taught that the earth moves round the sun, and there that fact is, so to speak, laid away on the shelf of his intellect, but he goes to his office 365 days in the year and perhaps never once thinks of it. It has no *practical effect upon his life*. Again, he has been taught that there was such a person as William the Conqueror; he has read all about his life in history, and has received the facts into his mind; and if anybody were to set up an opposite theory, he would be valiant for the truth of history, and yet he has perhaps never thought of William the Conqueror for a whole year. Neither his life nor death has any practical effect on the young man's life. Again, there are hundreds of drunkards who believe thoroughly in sobriety. I have known many who have protested that they hated drink, and believed that abstinence was the finest thing in the world; nevertheless, you found them drunk every Saturday night just the same. Their faith in sobriety had no practical effect on their lives!

These are illustrations of a DEAD FAITH, of a mere intellectual perception and approval of a truth, without any corresponding effect upon the heart. Now there are tens of thousands of people in this country who are just thus, and in no other way, believers in Christianity and in Jesus Christ. And, alas! they have been taught that because they have received the *facts about* Jesus Christ into their minds they are Christians; and, oh! what everlasting confusion, condemnation, and shame this theory has brought about. The world is full of liars, and cheats, and rogues, who believe these facts quite as much as I do! Oh, yes! and they would be valiant for the truth if attacked; but they are unbelievers still, in the Bible sense, and in danger of hell fire. The devils believe and tremble! ‘Oh,’ say the deceived guides, ‘salvation is not by works; it is by faith—“only believe,” and you are saved,’ without adding the qualifying passages, and the explanations of correlative texts, which the inspired writers never lost sight of for a moment. So it has come to pass that we have lying believers, cheating believers, deceiving believers, and unclean believers, and all manner of sinful believers. Of course they are head-believers, but they are deceived, and it is time that somebody sounded the trumpet of alarm, as John did. “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the Devil,” John and James lived to see the creeping up of this deadly heresy through the “wresting” of “Scriptures” from their explanatory connections (especially in the writings of Paul), which heresy would have been quite as horrible to the soul of this Apostle as it is to our souls

—making him teach unrighteousness, instead of righteousness. Hence James' warning: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." And you know what comes after death? —*corruption*. Like the body when the spirit is gone, it stinketh in the nostrils of God. If a mere intellectual perception of the truth were saving faith, the Devil would have been saved long ago, for he is one of the profoundest intellectual believers in the universe! You remember in the days of Christ's flesh, when the Pharisees were "if-ing" and "but-ing" as to His origin, the Devil had none of these difficulties; he comes boldly out, and says, "I KNOW THEE WHO THOU ART, THE HOLY ONE OF GOD!" But that faith did not change his character—he remains a devil still. Well might the Apostles James and Paul urge us to examine ourselves whether we be in THE faith, for there is a faith that damns, as well as a faith that saves.

My friend, WHICH HAVE YOU GOT?

Further, *saving faith is not mere FEELING on the subject of religion*. People go and hear finely wrought sermons about the sufferings of Christ, and the triumph of Christianity; and because they weep, or are wrought up to gladness at the extension of Christ's kingdom, they reason, 'I should not feel thus if I were not a Christian. If I am not a Christian, I am pretty near 'being one. I am not far wrong, or I should not feel like this.' A most delusive test. Suppose a man reading a romance; he has feelings excited in his soul in accordance with the sentiment that passes through his mind, but he lays down the book and goes his way, and is the same as before. And so the Apostle says as to hearing and not doing: "He is like unto a man

beholding his natural face in a glass : for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." The truth has no practical effect upon him. He lives the next day just the same. Can that be the faith which Hebrews xi. sets forth as the very power of God in the souls of men and women, leading them to be the prey of lions, to be sawn asunder, separated from all they loved, suffering a martyrdom in life and a martyrdom in death, for the kingdom and glory of God? Can it? Oh, no! you say a thousand times no!

Then, if it is neither intellectual perception nor conviction of the truth, nor mere feeling about the truth, WHAT IS IT? May God the Holy Ghost help us to find out!

I like to let one Scripture explain another, so I want to remark that the word translated *faith*, or belief, as used in the saving sense, is, in several other places in the New Testament, translated commit, or committal, the giving one's self over to another. Luke xvi. 11 : "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Now that is the same word as in this place is translated *faith* or *belief*.

Now, you see the Apostolic idea of faith. It is the committal, the giving over of the soul and of the whole being to God. It means such a giving himself up to God as constitutes him henceforth God's man or woman.

Again, the same word occurs in John ii. 24. : "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." He did not give Himself over into their power or keeping, because He could see into their wicked hearts, and knew what they would do with Him

if He did. Here is the same word as is translated *faith*, or belief, when used in the saving sense. These will suffice.

THEN WHAT IS FAITH? It is giving myself up to God, "risking" myself (if we may use such a term, when there is no risk about it), risking my all, for this life and for the next, on the truthfulness and the goodness of God, and daring to live and act contrary to everybody around me, as if all that God HAS SAID WERE TRUE!

Now, mark, there is no getting away from the fact that this is the Scriptural idea of faith; and I hope you will go and compare the Scriptures and examine for yourselves, because faith is, all through the Scriptures, represented as a VOLUNTARY thing. Here is encouragement for intellectual doubters. I think I have met with some sincere and honest souls in my life who have been tormented almost out of their minds by intellectual doubts, yet whose hearts have been honestly inquiring after God's truth. I have a great deal more sympathy with such people than with those who profess all and do nothing. God believes, as we do, in a man's *honesty* and sincerity of heart; and if you have a sincere heart, and want to know God, and obey Him, don't be afraid that He will leave you because the Devil is always shooting his hellish darts through your intellect.

FAITH IS A VOLUNTARY THING. It is a thing you can do or leave undone, or God must have been unjust to have made a man's everlasting salvation or damnation to depend on what he has no power to do. You have *not* absolute power over your intellect, but you have POWER OVER YOUR WILL. You can say, 'Here, Lord,

I am, troubled on this subject and on that; but I am not going to wait till I can clear up all these difficulties; I will take my stand on Thy declaration, and I will pledge myself to follow Thee, and work Thy righteousness, and do Thy will, as Thou shalt reveal it unto me.' You do that, and see if God won't send you light. I know He will. He will bring you into a large place and flood your soul with His light, and those doubts, like birds of prey, will take their flight for ever, and you will know to a demonstration that "God is light, and in Him is *no darkness at all?*" But it must be a voluntary committal of your heart to Him.

God wants your HEART. Then He will enlighten your intellect. He wants you to come and take your stand alongside His throne and the cross of His Son, and commit yourself once and for ever into His hands. He wants you to say, 'Now, Lord. I am a poor, guilty, helpless sinner. All the guilt of my past life is open to You, but You have promised to receive and to save me. You say, that if I come, the blood of Your Son shall atone for me, and cleanse me from all sin; that if I come, putting away my idols and forsaking my sins, that You will receive and forgive me; and that if I will come and put my neck under Your yoke, You will take me to be Your own. Here I come, weary and heavy-laden enough, but with all the choice of my heart, with all the power of my will, with all the purpose of my soul—all I have and am—I come and put myself at the foot of the cross, TO BE YOURS WHOLLY AND FOR EVER!' I never knew a soul come to that in my life—and I have known some terrible cases of conflict—who did not soon get flooded with light.

You see, He only wants you as you want one another. When a young man woos a young woman—and I use the illustration because I can't find a better—what does he want? He wants HER. He does not want to hear her say, 'I believe all you say about yourself, 'about your father and mother, your position and 'prospects—oh! yes, I quite believe all that.' She may say all that, but that is not enough. What does he want? He wants her HEART. He wants her to say, 'Yes, I am willing to accept you as my *bride-groom*, my love, my husband.' That is what he wants, and that is what God wants—your heart; and you may bring Him your gifts, and your head-faith, and your Church creeds, and your dead formal services; or whatever else you like, but He will not accept them, and in the day of judgment He will say, 'YOU NEVER GAVE ME YOUR HEART!'

Faith is the thing of the heart, hence the philosophy of the Scripture, which says, that "with the HEART man believeth unto righteousness." The HEAD CAN BELIEVE FACTS, WHILE THE HEART ABIDES IN UN-RIGHTEOUSNESS, in hypocritical professions and outside performances; but it is only with the *heart* that we believe unto RIGHTEOUSNESS. Bring your heart then, and the Holy Spirit will help you to commit it to God, and then you shall know what this means: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ." Come and commit yourself. Trust Him. What can harm you? What can happen to you? God has you in His hand as it is. Trust Him for your body. If you are in a land that you must go out of, as Abraham did, GO OUT of it, and He will find you another land flowing with milk and honey, and

another father's house, with brothers and sisters and friends far more dear and precious than those you leave; for He will enable you to look round on His own, and say, "Whosoever doeth the will of My Father, the same is My mother, and sister and brother." Come out. He will take care of you, and your Isaacs and Jacobs shall inherit the promise with you, if you will come out and seek the country that hath foundation. You shall have a seed to serve Him when your heads are laid in the grave. He will be your friend all the way through life, and, glory to His name! He will be with you when you are dying! You shall not go trembling and shrinking out of time into eternity like a thief and a robber; but like a victorious warrior you shall go sweeping through the gates!

Oh! He loves you, but He cannot save you if you will not commit yourself to Him—He cannot in the *nature of the case* save you in any other way than this. Paul was saved in this way; hear him saying, "For I know *Whom* (not in *what*) I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have COMMITTED unto HIM against that day."

Sin and the Devil have severed you from God; now He wants you back, and He has done all He can to win you by the death of His Beloved and by the enlightening of His Spirit: but it is for *you* to come and give yourself to Him. Won't you do it?

Won't you trust such a Father? Won't you pledge yourself to love and serve Him! Will you not stand up on His side in preference to a poor, rotten, godless world? Dare you not pledge yourself to His throne and link yourself on to His almightiness? Come along.

He waits still for your choice. He knocks still at the door of your *heart*. He asks your confidence, He woos your love. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”



THE PRODIGAL.

THE PRODIGAL.

LUKE xv. 13—“ *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.*”

THIS parable we may regard as a word-picture painted by Jesus Christ to show a world of rebels their heavenly Father's love for them. It is so beautiful that one is afraid to touch it lest one should spoil it. It is like adding another shade to some masterpiece of art: one fears to mar the whole. Yet there are points of instruction, and lessons which may lead to the most blessed results; and lessons that we cannot learn so well anywhere else.

Doubtless this parable had reference to the Jewish and Gentile worlds. By the returning of the younger son is prefigured the restoration of the Gentile nations; while the proud self-righteousness and rejection of the younger brother by the elder, refers to the Pharisaism of the Jews. But the primary and most important lesson is doubtless the misery and wretchedness of man while alienated and wandering from God, and the welcome and blessedness there is in store for him on returning to his Father's house. This parable does not refer to any particular class of men, but belongs to our race. It shows the desperate condition of man, and the wonderful love and benevolence of God.

I want to point out the analogy between the condition of this prodigal and that of unregenerate men universally.

The first point I want you to note is, that this young man demanded his portion. Taking advantage of the law of his country, which allowed him to do this, irrespective of his father's purposes or convenience, he simply isolated himself from the family interests, and sets up on his own account, that he might use his substance for his own gratification, without reference to his future welfare or the control of his father.

Just so sinners choose their portion in this life. They know that God requires them to live soberly, righteously, and godly, denying worldly lusts, and to lay up treasure in heaven. But they prefer their treasure here, they want their heaven now; present gratification is what they are intent upon, and this they pursue without respect to the will or purpose of God.

Further, this young man not only demanded his portion, but made off with it—he wanted to use it as he liked; he was tired of the discipline and restraints of home, he could not work out his wicked purposes there; so he gathered together his goods, and went as far away as he could, where he could live as he liked, unrestrained by his father's authority or grief. So sinners wilfully depart from God; for although all men are born in sin, and cannot be said to belong to God's spiritual family, there is a time in the history of every sinner (certainly of every one who hears the Gospel) when he *chooses to remain away from God*, and the choice to remain away is equivalent to positive departure. Thus sinners choose to keep away from God, and to live without the restraint of His law.

Perhaps you ask, But how do they do this? Of course they cannot literally get away from God, for He

spies out all their ways and compasses their path. But they get away from Him spiritually by *forgetting Him*. They reject His ministry, His Bible, His Spirit, shutting up their spiritual eyes and closing their spiritual ears. The remembrance of God frightens them in their sins, it terrifies them in their rebellion. Therefore their whole effort is to forget Him; they say, "We will not have Thee to reign over us;" "we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."

In this respect all men are alike concluded under sin. They differ largely in the manner of disposing of themselves while absent from God; but they are *all* away in a far country without His consent, contrary to His wish, and in defiance of His authority. They may possess many good qualities and amiable traits; they may be very generous and good-natured to their fellow-prodigals; but in setting at naught their Father's will and law, they are prodigals still, notwithstanding. Imagine a family of sons conspiring together to get their father's fortune. They find a place where they may live comfortably, and have a merry time together, independent of their father. But before they start they say, 'Well, though we have done with the old man, yet we won't fight and put out each other's eyes; we will draw up a moral code for ourselves, and live respectfully and decently. We will not waste our substance in riotous living, but we will make the best of our talents, opportunities, and means; nobody shall have any just cause of complaint about us!' Very good. But what ABOUT THE FATHER? Has HE no claims?—is it nothing to trample under foot his laws, frustrate his purpose, grieve his heart, and bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? Can their

generosity or morality one towards another atone for their flagrant want of fidelity, love, and obedience to their father? Just so, sinner, you may live ever so morally, and dispose of your substance ever so respectably, and yet be a prodigal, just as much as though you spent your substance in riotous living. Your Father has the FIRST CLAIM; and until you return to Him in repentance and submission, you are a rebel.

Further, this young man spent all. He wasted his substance in riotous living, the substance given him by his father—his time, talents, and education, as well as his wealth—*all were wasted*, thrown away on mere self and animal gratification; bringing no profit, but injury both to himself and others. Thus sinners waste their substance. All the blessings they possess come from God; He gives them life, health, talents, influence, substance, to be used in His service; but they WASTE THEM.

Perhaps someone says, 'I will have you know I do not waste mine; I am very economical, and work very hard for my family. I should like you to see my houses, and I am building more;' or, 'I have a good sum in the bank; I am not a spendthrift, nor an extravagant man.' My friend, the very fact that you are away from God blights it all, and therefore every farthing is wasted. There is no eternal profit. You have nothing to carry into eternity. Christian, have you ever stood by the death-bed of a prodigal, in anguish bewailing a life squandered? In vain those around assure him, 'But you have not lived in vain; you have brought up a family, look at your toil for them, and the lands you leave them, and the reputation you have acquired.' 'Oh,' he says, 'there is a CURSE

ON IT ALL; it will not endure the judgment bar. I have gathered much, but it is all in the far country; it will all be lost, burnt up, sunk.' Man only begins to live when he returns to God. We Christians never reckon our lives anything before our conversion; we look upon them as thrown away. And so it is with every sinner.

Supposing a man had decided in ten years to go to Australia, and that by an Act of Parliament he would have to sacrifice and leave behind him all that he possessed when he set foot upon the ship; what would you think of him, knowing this, and yet slaving so that he had no time to be with his family; toiling early and late, not giving himself time so much as to eat? And when you ask him, 'Why do you work so hard?' he answers, 'Oh, I am *saving*; I am gathering my substance; I am getting all I can.' You would say, 'My dear fellow, do you not know that you must forfeit every tittle of it, you must leave it all behind when you set sail for Australia?' And suppose he were to reply, 'Yes, I know that; but still I must spend the intervening years in gathering, nevertheless!' You would say, 'The man is insane; he is only fit for an asylum.'

SINNER, BEHOLD YOURSELF; you are slaving for learning, fame, wealth, power, or what else you have set your heart upon. But do you not know that you will have to leave all these at the edge of the river, and that, naked and empty, with nothing left but YOUR CHARACTER, you will have to step into the eternal world? Nothing will stand you in any stead there but that which has reference to God and His purposes concerning you. Oh, you know not but that to-day the sentence

may go forth: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; THEN WHOSE SHALL THESE THINGS BE?"

Further, I want to glance at the *consequences* of this young man's sin. His conduct was calculated to throw great discredit on his father's character and government; suspicions would be excited that he was unkind, austere, and exacting—unworthy of the affection and obedience of his son. So every sinner, by his rebellion against God, says to his fellow-men: 'God is not worthy of being served; He is a hard master; His commands are grievous, and his yoke burdensome.' He may not say this in words; but we all know how much louder actions speak than words.

This young man's conduct was also injurious to his family. By taking his portion prematurely, and wasting and prostituting it, he prevented the increase which would have resulted from his father's wise and judicious management of it; and thus injured the whole family. So every sinner takes the portion which God has given him, and instead of improving it for the general good, wastes it on self, or desecrates it to the injury of others. "One sinner destroyeth much good;" and this good is not his own, it is his Father's. Oh, how many souls are ruined, especially amongst the young, through the evil example of some one older, more intelligent or wealthy than themselves! Sinner, you cannot avoid these consequences of a sinful life—your conduct is a *daily curse* to those around you, your spirit is a moral miasma wherever you go.

But, as in all such cases, the most disastrous consequence of this young man's sin fell upon *himself*. We read that he came to be in want—the natural and

inevitable consequences of having spent all. The spending time was soon over; it yielded little pleasure, and that transitory. It was doubtless a goodly possession that youth took away from his father's house, but it was soon gone. And no sooner was it gone than "there arose a famine in that land." As the old adage says, "Troubles never come alone," and something generally happens when the substance is gone. How terrible this young man's circumstances!—alone, in a strange land, forsaken by his merry companions, of whom doubtless he had plenty while the substance lasted; but when the money goes, away go such companions, like rats from a sinking ship. Then the poor prodigal has to turn to the despised Salvationist for help and comfort. There is many a poor forlorn wretch to-night dying in an attic or cellar, without a single friend or companion near him, except it be perchance some missionary, on whom he would formerly have looked down with contempt.

A man's all is soon spent: his life, privileges, talents, opportunities, soon lost, and lost for ever. And then *how long, and bitter, and dreadful the WANT* which ensues! We read that to this young man's want no man ministered—"no man gave unto him." Alas! no creatures *can*, if they would, minister to the sinner's spiritual destitution. In vain must he cry to the world, the flesh, or the Devil to satisfy the wants of his HUNGRY SOUL. They one and all reply, "It is not in me." There is nothing in the pleasures of sense or the antidotes of Satan that will meet the wants of famishing souls.

How strange that, in the midst of all this poverty and destitution, this youth did not at once remember

his father's house ! Perhaps he did, but was yet too proud to return ; so " he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country," hoping by this expedient to be able to sustain life, and avoid the humiliation of going back to his father. So there are times in the history of all men wandering from God when they wake up to feel that they are in want. They want peace, purity, happiness, hope for death and eternity. They feel that they possess nothing which they dare take with them into the presence of their Judge ; and yet, like this young man, they will try any expedient rather than return to their Father's house. They will take any service of the Devil, and submit to any humiliating drudgery, even worse than feeding of swine, rather than give in. Happy is it for the sinner when a sense of his poverty and misery leads him to consideration and repentance, as it did in the case of this youth. His situation proved utterly inadequate to meet his wants ; and when driven to the last extremity of misery, not only having to feed swine, but being glad to feed with them, we read that " he came to himself." Madness is said to be in the heart of sinners ; " a deceived heart leadeth them astray." And so inveterate is this madness that, with those who are brought to repentance, it frequently happens that nothing short of the most heartrending afflictions will bring them to their right minds ; sickness, bereavement, loss, poverty, are amongst the means God uses for this end. But with many, so deep and inveterate is their insanity that even these means fail, and they go down to death with deceit on their tongues, and a lie in their right hand. Oh, how many in the day of judgment, who now consider themselves

very sensible and judicious people, will look back upon their career on earth as one of unmitigated madness ! What insanity will it then appear, to have bartered away pardon, purity, and everlasting bliss for the empty husks of carnal gratification !

A gentleman said to me at the railway station the other day, ‘You were right in what you said last night.’ I asked in what respect. He answered, ‘In saying that the Lord has to inflict the heaviest chastisement in order to bring sinners to Himself. ‘I know it,’ he said ; ‘it has been so in my case.’ I asked, ‘Has it answered the purpose?’ ‘No,’ said he, shaking his head. ‘Then,’ I said, ‘look out ; you are not bad enough yet. God will strip you of every blessing and every comfort you possess, rather than let you go to hell in this state.’ ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘I have not much left ; the Lord took away from me three years ago a loving, precious wife, the idol of my soul ; then a little while ago I lost £30,000, and I have had other troubles since. In fact, He has been knocking me about in my circumstances for years.’ I said, ‘Yes, because He loves you too well to let you go to hell without trying to save you. And if you will not let Him do it without stripping you naked as the prodigal, you must expect this chastisement, till, like him, you are willing to leave the far country and return to your Father.’

But, I repeat, happy the sinner whose sorrows and sufferings lead to repentance ! The first step in the right direction was REFLECTION ; this young man *began to think* ! At length he lost sight of everything but his own destitution and the plenty of his father’s home ; then he said to himself, ‘How many hired

servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!' What bitter reflections must have filled his mind! Can you not imagine that you see him sitting on a stone, amid the husks and filth of the swine-yard, ruminating on his past life, thinking of his folly and wickedness, and wondering whether, if he were to go back, his father would receive him? Happily these reflections led him to RESOLUTION. How many take the first step; they think, and ponder, and promise, and intend, but they *don't make up their minds*. Not so this young man; he says, 'I will arise;' he asserts his manhood. He is conscious of moral freedom; he knows he can return if he likes. He does not sit down whining, 'I can't, I shall not be able to get there; I can't contend with the difficulties of the road.' If he had done that, he might have sat there until now, if he had lived as long, and been no nearer. Alas! how many of God's prodigals go as far as this; they think, and ponder, and resolve, and *re-resolve*, but they never act. Your resolutions will not help you unless you put them into practice. This young man puts his resolution into ACTION. He starts on his journey! No doubt he had many a struggle with himself on the road, and many a struggle with the Devil; for there was a Devil then, you know, just as there is one now. Methinks, as he got half-way, hungry and weary, I see him leaning his back against a tree, and going through one of those mental conflicts. The possibility of his father being dead, or, if alive, unwilling to receive him, angrily and reproachfully shutting the door in his face, would rise before him. Satan would suggest, 'What impudence, for you to think of going home after having treated

‘the old man as you have done, breaking his law, ‘wasting his money, and bringing yourself into this ‘disgraceful and dilapidated condition! How dare ‘you think of it! it is adding insult to injury. You ‘had better turn back, or try and get a situation ‘somewhere up in this neighbourhood.’ But the prodigal’s eyes were opened, he believed that his father loved him still; he was looking towards his father’s house, and his heart was melting with repentance and longing to be reinstated in his father’s love. And so, plucking up his courage, he starts again, supporting himself as best he can on his weary route. As he comes within view of the old homestead, the familiar scenes of his childhood are too much for him, and he stands almost paralysed with grief!

We will leave him there for a minute, and go to seek his father. I don’t suppose the father was looking out for him; but, as was customary in the East, he was probably walking on the roof of his house in the cool of the day, and, as on many a former occasion, he thought of his long-lost son,—for though he was a prodigal, he *was his lad still!* It might be that he had some strange presentiment or foreboding, as we sometimes have when anything uncommon is about to happen. How natural that he should gaze over the expanse of country across which his son had gone! and, as he looks, he sees a speck in the distance: a vague curiosity compels his gaze; he looks as if into vacancy, until the figure draws nearer, when something in the form or the gait strikes him, and he says to himself, “Can this be my boy coming back?” Then he chides himself, and says, “What a foolish old man I am! because I dreamed of him last night, or have

felt this strange foreboding, should I expect him to come?" And he takes his eyes away and breathes another prayer, added to hundreds offered before: "O Lord, my God, grant that I may see my prodigal boy before I die." He takes another round on the roof, and returns to the same spot, and as he looks again he perceives the figure has come nearer, and his eyes are glued, as it were, to that form: the eye of affection is quick of recognition. He says, "Can it be—it is like him—it must be—God is going to answer my prayers—IT IS, IT IS MY LONG-LOST BOY!" He makes the best of his way down and then, as fast as his aged limbs will carry him, he runs to assure himself. It is years since he ran like that, but love inspires him with strength, and makes his feet like hinds' feet. Away he goes over the lawn and through the adjoining meadow! The prodigal too has been thinking, as he has drawn nearer; and when he lifts up his eyes and beholds his father, he runs to meet him; they rush into each other's arms, and his father falls upon his neck with the kiss of reconciliation. He waits not to hear the boy's confession; the best proof of his repentance is that *he is here at home* again. But the sobs will come the prodigal must confess, and he breaks out, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; and am not worthy to be called thy son." THAT WAS TRUE REPENTANCE. He cares not, he will black the boots, or groom the horses, or sit in the kitchen—anything so that he may be in his father's house, and enjoy his pardoning smile. Here are no excuses, no palliations, but a whole-hearted, honest confession of his guilt. The father accepts it, and in proof of his forgiveness he orders the ring, and the best robe, and the shoes to

be put upon him, and says, "Kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

What says the great Word-painter who gives us this wonderful picture?—"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Sinner, will you be that one?

OH, wanderer, knowing not the smile
Of Jesu's lovely face,
In darkness living all the while,
Rejecting offered grace;
To thee Jehovah's voice doth sound,
Thy soul He waits to free;
Thy Saviour hath a ransom found,
There's mercy still for thee.

There's mercy still for thee!
There's mercy still for thee!
Poor trembling soul, He'll make thee whole—
There's mercy still for thee!

Long in the darkness thou hast strayed,
Away from joy and peace;
Thou hast these worldly pleasures tried,
But found them soon to cease.
Without one lingering ray of hope,
In anguish thou may'st be;
Oh! listen to the joyful sound,
There's mercy still for thee!

For thee, though sunk in deep despair
Thy Saviour's Blood was shed;
He for thy sins was as a lamb
To cruel slaughter led,
That thou may'st find, poor sin-sick soul,
A pardon full and free;
What boundless grace, what wondrous love,
There's mercy still for thee!

Though sins of years rise mountains high
And would thy hopes destroy,
Thy Saviour's Blood can wash away
The stains, and bring thee joy.
Now lift thy heart in earnest prayer,
To Him for safety flee;
While still the angels chant the strain,
"There's mercy still for thee!"

H. H. B.



SOWING AND REAPING.

SOWING AND REAPING.

GAL. vi. 7, 8.—“ *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*”

I PRESUME that the principle or the law which the Apostle lays down in this text will be admitted to be one universally received and acted upon with respect to this life; that men in general have learned by observation and experience that there is an exact correspondence between the seed sown and the harvest reaped; that they do not expect to gather grapes off thorns nor figs off thistles, but they expect that just as they sow in this physical world so they will reap. On this principle, parents instruct and counsel their children. They teach their children that according to their industry, application to their studies, their virtue, and care to improve their opportunities in youth will be their prosperity, health, and honour in maturer years; and you will all say that is right counsel. Masters teach their servants that according to their punctuality and attention to business will be their success and prosperity in worldly things; while, on the other hand, that to be idle and indifferent to the interests of their employers, to waste their time and throw away their opportunities, will bring disgrace and poverty in old age. And I suppose that everybody approves of such counsel. They say, ‘Yes, that is too

manifest to be contradicted ;' and if I were to leave the operation of this law with its application to this life, there would not be a dissentient voice in my audience ; everybody, whether they acted upon it or no, would say, Amen. But you see the Apostle *does not leave it here*, but takes hold of this law and follows it on its operation into the moral and spiritual world and into eternity ; and so I want as far as may be this afternoon to follow with Paul in tracing this law of moral fruit-bearing with respect to the soul, and into eternity.

And first I want you to note that the Apostle lays down in this text the principle that just as in natural things, so in spiritual things men reap according as they sow. He asserts that God has made it a fundamental principle of His government that men shall reap morally and spiritually, as they do physically, according as they sow. You can set at naught this law, but that will not deliver you from the sad and terrible consequences of its operation. God has settled it. The decree has gone out of His mouth, "that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap ;" and with the decree He has energised, so to speak ; every moral action with the awful power of reproducing itself with increase ; in other words, God has so made me in my body, my soul, and my spirit, that I cannot help reaping to-morrow according as I sow to-day, notwithstanding the intervening night's sleep. God has so made me, and I cannot get away from that, because it is the law of my being. If God were to die to-morrow, and if heaven were to be extinguished, and hell were to be extinguished, if I remained what I am, I should go on reaping as I have sowed. The

operation of this law does not depend on anything outside of myself.

Let us just look, in the second place, at the development or working out of this law in actual experience. We will take for illustration the case of a little child. We will suppose that this child has arrived at the point of intelligence sufficient to define for himself right and wrong. Now then comes temptation, circumstances combine, and Satan presents a temptation to commit some sin, perhaps to tell a lie, or to appropriate something that is not his own. The moral sensibility of the child is shocked. He shrinks, so to speak, back from evil; and yet there is a perverse inclination in him which leads him in that direction, not for the sake, mind, of committing sin, but for the sake of the self-gratification which the sin will bring. Nobody sins for the sake of committing sin, except he is become a demon. Young man, when you do something which your conscience condemns, and which you know that the Holy God disapproves, it is not because you want your conscience to condemn you and God to disapprove you. Oh, no; it is because you like that thing, you want the gratification which the indulgence will bring. You are sorry, perhaps, that it *is* sinful; but you do it for the gratification of yourself, and thus commit sin in doing it. It is so with the child. It does not want to sin. Perhaps he has had a praying mother, and has been warned and cautioned, and he stands trembling, as it were, on the brink of fate. Satan urges the temptation, shows the desirableness of the object, pushes the child, so to speak, on to it; while conscience and the Spirit of God exhibit the

onsequence of the sin, persuade and lure the child in the opposite direction. Who shall settle what that child will do? God will not invade the freedom of the will even of a child of seven years old. No one can decide for him, no one in heaven, earth, or hell, but himself. Now we will suppose the child gives himself over to this temptation, gives his will over on the side of evil. He says, 'Yes, I will have that thing. I don't care 'about the consequences, I will have it;' and he commits the sin—sows his first seed to the flesh. Now, wherein is the child in a worse position than he was before? How does the harvest of corruption begin to spring up? The very first effect of sin is to darken the understanding and harden the heart; consequently, instead of the shame and remorse which always follows a guilty act, leading the child, as it *ought*, to repentance and confession, the evil seed having conceived in the child's soul brings forth falsehood and deception. To his darkened understanding and blunted moral perception it appears indispensable that the sin should be *hidden*; accordingly, he commits, perhaps, ten more sins in order to hide the first, and these in their turn produce a still more abundant harvest of corruption. Of course the next time temptation is presented, the fall is easier, the child suffers fewer qualms of conscience; and if he be placed in circumstances of temptation continually, ten to one he will become a confirmed liar or a confirmed thief, as the case may be, if God do not interpose by some extraneous agency to prevent it. Sowing to the flesh naturally brings forth corruption. This would be a fortunate congregation if there were not some illustrations of this experience here!

Ah! perhaps there is a young man in this Hall who left his father's house ten or five years ago, a comparatively pure and innocent youth, with holy aspirations, noble principles, and with the desire and intention to serve God. He kissed his mother and sister, and bade them good-bye with a heart bounding with anticipations of future prosperity and progress, and he intended to be good. But soon some fiend in human shape crossed his path, and perhaps lent him some insidious, venomous, hellish book, asking him to read it; and when he appeared to hesitate, laughed at him, and said, 'Oh, you are not tied to your mother's apron-strings now, you know. You are going to be a man on your own account; you can surely read this.'

THE FIRST QUESTIONABLE BOOK!!

Here just let me say to you who are parents, whatever else you leave undone, train your children in moral courage. Teach them from five years old to be bold enough to say "*No*" to the tempter. Teach them to despise the man that can't bear to be laughed at. Teach them to stand in the light of God, and to say 'No' to Hell, and to all Hell's emissaries. Oh that you would! You do not know what could be done in this direction with the Holy Spirit's help. But I am afraid a great many persons never try to do this. As that young man went home, looking over the first three or four pages of that book, he saw what it was, and what it was likely to do, and his conscience and the Spirit of God said, 'Shut it up and put it in the fire.' But he thought he would have to meet his

so-called friend, and he did not like the idea of being laughed at. And so he let his will go over on the side of evil. He read it, and thus brought the first hellish breath of impurity over his being—he sowed his first seed to the flesh, and that young man would rather shrink into hell than tell this congregation what the crop has been. Ah, if an angel had told some of you, three, five, ten years ago, that you would become what you are to-day, you would have laughed him to scorn. Whence has come this change, this harvest of corruption? *From your own sowing.* You have sown to the flesh. Conscience protested, the Spirit warned, but you followed your inclinations, gratified your senses, and thus have benumbed your moral nature and scathed your soul.

You remember the first questionable place you visited, how the Spirit thundered in the ears of your soul, that house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. But you stifled the voice of conscience, and yielded your will to unlawful gratification, and ever since you have been sowing to the flesh. I ask you, What are you reaping? for with some here the reaping has begun already! Ah, you are reaping a seared conscience, a blasted character, blighted prospects, a diseased body, and, in hours of solitude and sickness yet to come, hurricanes of anguish, remorse, and despair. Verily, “God is not mocked.” But I beseech you to remember that you are your own destroyer. God has not done it; angels have not done it; your parents have not done it; the Devil has not done it, he has only tempted you, whereas a whole legion of devils could not have *forced* you. No; you yourself have done it—you are your own executioner.

Oh, young men who have not yet entered the snare of the fowler, beware, shut your ears and your eyes to evil insinuations.

NEVER READ AN EVIL BOOK.

If you chance on one, the moment you suspect its character, put it *in the fire*, and thus prevent it becoming a minister of death to any other soul. Do not let your soul be soiled with evil; keep clean as far as you are clean. It is an infinite advantage not to have known the Devil's dirtiness, not to have had anything to do with the unfruitful works of darkness, of which it is a shame even to speak or to think. Keep your hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life. Keep your imaginations, and don't allow polluting thoughts to gain access by any preventible mediums. *Resist* the Devil, and *he* will flee from you.

Further, I want you to observe that the most terrible penalties of this law are *spiritual* even in this world; though the body, the character, and the circumstances as a rule, partake in the corruption, it is the SOUL that reaps the principal harvest of woe. Go ask that poor emaciated prodigal, dying of the rottenness implanted in his bones by a career of intemperance and vice—ask him what constitutes his severest suffering, his direst misery? He will not tell you of the prostration, the fever, and anguish of his body, but of the remorse, the agony, and apprehension of his soul. He cries, 'Oh, never mind my body; it is my soul, my poor soul!' If anybody here has ever stood by the side of such a bed, have you not read in the more than mortal agony of such a face the words, "Be not deceived; God is not

mocked?" There are some cases in which it seems as though God lifted the curtain of mortality before the soul passes out of time, so that those around may *see* as far as possible the future heritage of woe consequent on a life of sin. Alas! we in the Salvation Army get many awful illustrations of this. I will give you one or two which rise before me at the moment. One of our officers was fetched late one night to visit a young man said to be dying. In relating the story he says: 'I shall never forget the scene; I could not get it out of my mind for many days and nights. When I entered the attic, I found the relic of a fine young fellow of about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, with beautiful black eyes almost standing out of his head, his hands clenched in agony, and he crying out in awful tones, 'Curse them! curse them! WHERE ARE THEY? They have helped me to this, and now they have left me to die alone!' He referred to his evil companions. Our officer drew near, and tried to calm and comfort him by inspiring hope of mercy and pardon, but he could produce no effect; the young man's rage and vengeance at the realisation of his desperate state, and of the villany of those who had lured him on to it, could not be restrained, but continued to vent itself in wild denunciations and curses, until the one friend he had with him was obliged to retire and leave him to die with our officer only in the room. He died in a perfect frenzy of rage and despair! Surely on his coffin-lid there should have been inscribed, "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." That young man was a minister's son, and had been trained at college! Alas! I fear this fact might have something to do with his downfall, if it be true, which I fear it is,

that our colleges are much more prolific of infidelity and debauchery than of godliness and self-discipline !

Another case, which I had also from the lips of a devoted officer, was that of a young woman who had allowed herself to be drawn from the paths of virtue into the vortex of impurity and corruption. Our visitor was sent for by a neighbour who had been alarmed by the shrieks of the dying girl. When he got to her bedside, he found her fingers so fast locked in the tresses of her hair that it was vain to try to disentangle them, and she was screaming, ‘My soul is *murdered*, MURDERED ! It’s too late, too late ! I’m *lost, lost, LOST !*’ And thus she died. I might go on to multiply illustrations, but these are surely sufficient, sinner, to show you what the harvest must be of a life of sowing to the flesh.

Truly God has made sin to be its own punishment !

If the soul be immortal, there is only one thing necessary to its everlasting misery, and that is that it remain sinful.

I want you to note, further, that we have no reason to suppose that death in any way changes or annuls the action of this law. Both sound philosophy and Scripture assert that death is powerless to destroy or alter the nature of the soul, except, indeed, it be to quicken and intensify its faculties by removing the fleshly coil : none of its faculties will be destroyed or suspended ; it will simply change worlds, enter on a new sphere of existence, and it will be amenable to the same law and the same God as in this life.

Reason as well as Scripture pronounces at the death of every sinner, “Let him that is filthy be filthy still.” If this be true, it follows that, so far from death

repealing this law of moral reproduction, it will greatly facilitate its operation, by removing those barriers which exist in this life. Here the worst of men reap only partially as they sow: this is a state of probation, not of retribution. And therefore God has ordained many alleviating circumstances and ministries of mercy to palliate, or, if men would let Him, to turn away the bitter fruits of their evil sowing, and induce them to begin to sow to the Spirit. But, after death, the sowing time will be ended, and there will be no further hindrance to the full harvest of woe and corruption springing from the evil seed sown in this life. Oh, sinner, what will you do then? All the enchantments of sinful sowing will have passed away for ever, and there will be nothing left but the DOLEFUL REAPING for ever and ever. Be not deceived. Do not let Satan lull you to sleep again. For as surely as you reap to-day according as you sowed yesterday, notwithstanding the night's sleep which has intervened, so surely must you reap in eternity as you have sown in time.

Further, the text and many other passages seem to indicate an analogy in *kind* as well as in degree between the character of the seed sown and the harvest to be reaped. This may be as literally true as that like begets like the world over; and therefore each soul may find its particular sins to have in them the germ of their principal punishment. The "worm that dieth not" has often been supposed to be the gnawings of conscience finally awakened on account of the sins of time. Alas! we know that this terrible imagery of our Saviour cannot be worse than the thing signified. We know also that it may be fitly applied to the cravings of sinful passion and the pangs of remorse

even in this life ; how much more when all the sources of gratification are eternally dry, all the alleviations withdrawn, all hope of relief dead. Ask the wretched slave of any sinful appetite what is his highest misery, and he will tell you the suffering consequent upon the cravings of his passion when he has no means to gratify it. ‘Oh,’ cried a poor dying drunkard awhile ago, with frantic and maniacal shouts, ‘give me brandy : I will have brandy ; I can’t die without brandy ; give me brandy.’ Now, suppose the soul given up to the complete mastership of any sinful passion for ever, without one solitary source of gratification, and you have a being who may fitly appropriate the language which Milton puts into the mouth of Satan, “Oh, could I flee myself, myself am hell !”

Sinner, do you see that you are sowing a seed of corruption, whose hellish brood will sting your naked soul through all eternity ? You are sowing to the flesh ; but do you see what the harvest must be—*must be* ? for God has so made you, that if there were no material hell, while you exist and remain guilty, you must be a hell to yourself. Do you see you have no choice ? you must go on eating the bitter fruit of your own doings for ever.

· WHAT WILL YOU DO ?

You cannot kill your soul ; it is made of material on which you cannot lay violent hands—it will live in spite of you. What will you do ? You have been sowing to the flesh all your life. You say, ‘I have no power to sow to the Spirit, to righteousness, and to God.’ Do you say, “Woe is me, I am undone ; there is no hope ?”

Are you tired of sowing to the flesh? are you *willing* to begin to sow to the Spirit? If so, oh, joyful news! there is help, desperate as your case may be. Help is laid upon One that is mighty.

Only a God could meet your case, and, lo! a God has met it. Jesus Christ, the Righteous. He has not destroyed this law, but He has found a way by which to deliver those who come to Him from its awful consequences, by letting its envenomed tail, so to speak, sink into His own bosom, and Himself bearing the punishment due to your deadly sowing, in His own body on the tree. He who knew no sin has been made a curse for you, that you might be made a partaker of the righteousness of God in Him. If you will only come to Him, and cast your guilty soul on His sacrifice, He will free you from the bitter consequences of your past evil ways. And He will, better still, renew your mind, and put a new spirit within you, so that henceforth you shall be able to sow to the Spirit. And then this terrible law of which we have been speaking will become your friend, and you shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. He has done this for some of us. We once sowed to the flesh, more or less in outward acts, but all alike in heart. We lived unto ourselves, and are now ashamed of the fruits of our evil sowing. But "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" and He will save you if you will let Him. 'Oh!' said a young man the other day, 'but the marks, the stain, can never be got off.' 'Oh, yes!' we replied, 'they can; there is one medium, and ONLY ONE, that can wash the blood-red hand and the blood-red conscience too, and that is the precious blood of Christ.' We could show you

thousands in the ranks of the Salvation Army once as bad as you, and most likely a great deal worse. Men and women, some of them, who have been favoured with every advantage in youth—wept over and entreated by Christian parents, loved and laboured for by teachers and ministers, who notwithstanding, had wandered to the ends of the earth, and committed every sin that human nature is capable of—hardened, besotted, brutalised, sunk to the lowest level of debauchery and crime. And yet now they are washed, they are sanctified and restored to favour with God and man, all through the blood. Will you try it? Will you put your foot down, and say this afternoon, ‘By the grace of God, I will never sow another seed to the flesh?’ Will you let go all your miserable *provision* for the gratification of the flesh? and will you come and pledge yourself to be the Lord’s in righteousness and in true holiness? If you will, be sure you shall know the blessing of sowing to the Spirit in this life, and in the next you shall reap “life everlasting.” May God help you! Amen.



“QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.”

“QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.”

1 THESSALONIANS v. 19.—“*Quench not the Spirit.*”

THESE words imply the greatest wonder of human existence—the capacity in man to resist God. Truly, man is a wonderful being; and this is not surprising when we remember that he was made originally in the image of God, mentally as well as spiritually. Although fallen, eclipsed, dwarfed, yet the outline of man's make—his faculties, capacities, possibilities—remain the same. Some theologians, in their desire to exalt God, very much debase and under-estimate man; whereas the best way to glorify the Creator is to give Him full credit for the excellency of His workmanship. God made man a wonderful being. “Is it not written in your law,” says the Saviour, “I said, ye are gods?—and,” He adds, “the Scriptures cannot be broken;” that is, there is a sense in which it is true. Man is the sovereign of himself; no being, no power can coerce his will. He can resist all the moral forces of the universe; and it is this power which constitutes his greatness and his danger. There it is, an undeniable fact. He can resist all the persuasions and entreaties of his fellow-man either to good or evil. He can resist all the power of the devil. The demoniac, the possessed with a legion, could not be kept back from Jesus when he willed to go to Him; and we are exhorted to *resist* the Devil, implying, of course, that we have power to do so.

Man can also resist God, and absolutely refuse to obey and serve his Maker, as did Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews. Stephen charges it on the Jews, as the climax of their wickedness, that they had persistently resisted the strivings of the Spirit of God. “As your fathers did, so did ye; ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” God created man with this power, and He will not invade or ignore it. He saw it best on the whole to make man free, even though he would abuse his freedom, rather than to make him a slave, being bound to a certain result by the law of cause and effect, as the sun and stars or the animals, and consequently having no power of virtue himself, nor of bringing any moral glory to his Maker. God retains His power over man as a Sovereign, not by coercing his will, but by rewarding or punishing him according to the use he makes of his freedom—according to his *willing* and *acting*.

Every humane earthly Government goes on the same principle. It does not put a subject in irons in order to prevent him from committing crime, thus destroying his freedom, and taking the responsibility of his action on itself; but it reigns over him *in* his freedom by punishing him when the crime is committed. Thus God reigns over man as a free agent, and *thus only*; and there is no text in the Bible, interpreted consistently with itself and with correlative passages, which represents God as reigning in any other way,--other than that is, than as a *moral* Governor. Hence, when He wants to influence man in any given course, He condescends to reason with him, and to offer to his consideration motives and consequences, in order to induce him to choose as He desires. God does not take

him by the collar, metaphorically speaking, and drive him in a given course, with his will or without it, in the same way as He drives the sun and stars along. This would be a reflection on His own wisdom in having made him a free agent at first. God is always *consistent with Himself*, and therefore He conforms all His treatment of man to the freedom of his nature; hence He *persuades* and *strives* with man by His Holy Spirit.

We want to note, first, the *object* or *purpose* for which the Spirit strives with man. Of course the very idea of strife between two parties supposes that they are at variance; there could be no strife if they were agreed. In this case it proves that man is in a state of alienation and opposition to God, and consequently in a state of condemnation and death. Now, God wants to win man back from this lost condition to one of submission and salvation. This is His first great aim and purpose. This is what He wants with every unsaved man and woman in this Hall—that you should get down and *submit* to Him. He does not ask you to go to chapel, or join the Church, or pray, except to cry for pardon; but to get down and give up your heart to Him, to choose whom you will serve, and do it at once, and then everything else will follow. GOD MEANS SALVATION—salvation for every man and woman here. Christ died for you. He wants to save you, and sends you the Spirit to this end.

I want you to note, further, that there is no salvation without the Spirit. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” No man will seek God without the Spirit. Oh that all men would seek Him who *have* the strivings of the Spirit! How many millions would soon be saved!

But we want to point out, in the second place, how men quench the Spirit.

The Spirit strives first by convincing of sin. He is sent to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. This He does by bringing the law of God to bear on the past life, showing the sinner the awful condemnation resting on him because of his past transgressions : also by revealing the innate alienation and rebellion of his heart. He turns, so to speak, His light on the sinner's soul, and shows up the depravity and impurity within. God's way is always in keeping with the laws of man's nature ; and we are so constituted that before we can be induced to change our course, we must be convinced that our present one is wrong. Now, the great aim of many sinners is to satisfy themselves that they are all right ; or, if wrong at all, not much wrong. Now God sees that there is no possibility of salvation until men see that they are all wrong, and therefore He strives, contends, with them,—labours to make them realise that they are guilty. His course with infidels is just this ; He does not answer their quibbles, but thunders in their consciences, ‘ Guilty ! guilty ! and in danger of everlasting death ! ’ Alas ! instead of yielding to these strivings, men quench them by stifling their convictions ; and they do this by *hiding* them, refusing to give them expression in tears and prayers, as the publican did. They keep silence ; and none, but they who feel it, know, what a hell is thus created in the soul. David said, “ When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring.” This stifling of conviction is done to much greater extent than any of us imagine. Men think it is unmanly, weak, to confess

their sins ; they are ashamed to confess what all heaven would be interested in hearing. There are some here who have been convinced many a time from their childhood upwards. If you had yielded to these strivings, given expression to your shame, sorrow, and remorse for your past sins, your hearts would have melted and gushed out in tender penitence towards God and man ; but you dammed up these feelings, silenced your conscience, and thus resisted the work of the Spirit on your heart. Beware ! this is the process by which millions have filled up the measure of their iniquities. They stifle convictions by rushing into counter excitements, such as inordinate devotion to business. Thousands will perish through unlawful absorption in lawful things. Drink !—I heard of a man saying a short time ago, that he got drunk every night for a fortnight, in order to stifle his convictions of sin. Pleasure !—I heard of a young lady not very long ago, who said that she needed a ball three times a week to save her from getting melancholy about her soul, which meant, of course, to enable her to resist the Spirit of God. Others run headlong into sin. I knew a man who ran races for wages, who became deeply convinced, who, when remonstrated with and implored to decide at once for God, answered, ‘ I will run another race, if I do run into hell.’ Perhaps you say, ‘ Oh, these were foolhardy and obtinate rebels. I have never done like that.’ No, but you have equally fought against the Spirit, and stifled the convictions which He has begotten in your soul.

Secondly, men resist the Spirit by absolutely and persistently refusing to consider the future—to look at the consequences of a life of sin. The Spirit is

continually explaining this; He reasons of righteousness and of judgment. God seeks to influence men by fear as well as by hope. It is quite rational for a man to abandon a course which he comes to see will end badly; and fear of this bad end is a right and proper motive to be used in deterring him from it. On this principle the Spirit of God appeals to men's fears. He uses fear of retribution in this world, thundering in the sinner's conscience: “Be sure your sin will find you out.” “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” I know a gentleman who is constantly in fear of some calamity. The sight of a coffin or a funeral puts him almost into hysterics. He lives in constant dread of death. Why? Because his conscience is guilty, and forebodes coming retribution. The Spirit of God reproves and condemns Him continually. I knew another man, who, when he was playing cards, would see in letters of fire, traced on the backs of them, such texts as “The wicked shall be turned into hell,” “The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever,” and for a long time the Spirit thus followed him, warning and entreating, until, thank God, he yielded and got saved. Thus the Spirit follows many long months and years. Those who will not yield to love, and will not be drawn, He seeks to alarm and drive, in the first instance, by their fears. And how do men act? One would think they would come at once from the broad road that leads to all this misery. But no; they try to banish these fears,—to drown the thoughts of these possibilities, some in one way, some in another, according to their temperaments and circumstances. I heard of a man when I was preaching in Portsmouth,

who was heard to say to a companion, after listening to the truth, ‘Come on; let’s go and wash it off.’ Alas! how many wash it off, or, in other words, quench the Spirit!

Suppose that a friend of yours in Australia were made acquainted with some terrible calamity about to fall on you and your family; and suppose he were to come all the way to England to warn you, and to try to avert the danger; but instead of welcoming him, listening to and being influenced by his counsel, you were to cold-shoulder him, resent his interference, and shut him out of your dwelling. What would be the result? Would he not be grieved and offended, and leave you to perish? And yet this is exactly how you are treating the Spirit of God.

But, further, men quench the Spirit by refusing to look at the blessedness of a life consecrated to God.

The Spirit tries to influence men more by appealing to their hopes than to their fears. He sets before them, often in early childhood, the desirableness of pardon, peace, and purity, and the nobility of a life of influence for good and usefulness to others. With some minds these motives are more powerful than fears of suffering, death, or hell. So He dwells almost exclusively on them, trying to allure the soul through its hopes to accept of Christ and His salvation. Alas! with many this has been as ineffectual as the other. They will not yield—they cling on to some idol, to some forbidden indulgence. They refuse to be influenced, they resist, and resist the Spirit, until, long grieved and resisted, He takes His sad flight.

Fourth. Men quench the Spirit by deliberate and wilful refusal to yield when the judgment is

enlightened, and the duty of present submission is fully admitted. The Saviour said, “I judge not according to outward appearance.” No, because some who appear the least sinners in the sight of men are the greatest in the sight of God. The Pharisees, with their outside morality and knowledge of the law, were far greater sinners in the estimation of Christ than the publicans and harlots who thronged to hear Him. Sin against light, against conviction and Divine influence, is the climax of rebellion. This is the great condemnation, that when light is come, men love darkness rather than light.

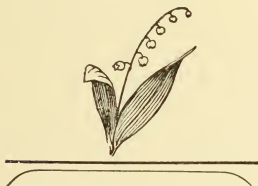
The amount of light determines the amount of guilt. “Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.” “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not sinned, but now they have no cloak for their sin.” Oh, sinner, how often has He come and spoken to you! how often have you heard Him distinctly say to you: “Son,” “daughter,” “give Me thine heart!” How often has He knocked at the door, but you deliberately said “No!” You resisted and struggled against His influence. Your proud heart lifted itself up against Him who would have gathered you, but you would not. Oh, it is to be feared there are many living around us who have quenched the Spirit by determined opposition; and there are multitudes in hell who have lost their souls, their salvation, and their God, not through the commission of some great crime against society, or against themselves; but they have lost all and perished for ever by deliberately and persistently

refusing to surrender themselves to God. This in the one sin which seals all other sins on the soul. All other sin can be forgiven, but this will not stoop to be forgiven; it will not let the soul come near enough to God to ask forgiveness; it makes *salvation impossible* while it is persisted in. This was the last drop which filled up the cup of the iniquities of those Jerusalem sinners. If, after all their hardness and impenitence, they would have received the testimony of Jesus, and, even at the eleventh hour, the last hour of their day of grace, had ceased to resist the Holy Ghost, they might even then have been saved. The Son of God Himself says it: but they “WOULD NOT.” They wilfully and determinedly resisted the Spirit, until they drove Him finally away from their hearts and their city, and wrung the sad, pathetic words from the lips of the Son of God, as He wept over them: “but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Oh, Christian, where are your bowels of compassion, that you can see souls all around you going on day after day, year after year, in enlightened headstrong rebellion against God, and not weep? Alas! how few see or feel these terribly awful truths. May the Holy Ghost reveal them to every one of us, that we may never cease to persuade men; and when we cannot turn them, to say with the prophet, “If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride;” and with a greater than he, “Oh that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

But I want to glance at the CONSEQUENCES of quenching the Spirit. Those who quench the Spirit

have no concern about their souls—no desire after God, pardon, or righteousness. There may be remorse, fear of death and of hell, but no desire. Desire after righteousness and God are produced *alone* by the Spirit. Man would be as destitute of it as Satan, without the Holy Spirit, hence He was the first great gift procured for us by Christ and given to our race after the fall in the covenant of grace. David and all the prophets attribute all the good in man to the operation of the free Spirit of God. Now this is a most important point for us to note, in order to prevent any one making a mistake in judging of themselves or others. People who have quenched the Spirit do not often think so till death overtakes them; they are generally *utterly indifferent*. The want of all feeling on the subject of the soul's salvation is one of the signs of having quenched the Spirit. When a person begins to *feel*, it is a sign that the Spirit is striving. Have you any desire for pardon, righteousness, or God? If so, you still have the Holy Spirit. Oh praise God! Will you submit now, this moment, and come to Jesus? If you will, though it be the eleventh hour with you, you shall be saved. For though we have no distinct revelation on the point, from two or three incidental passages it seems highly probable that, when the Spirit departs, life soon ends. The great purpose for which God keeps sinners in existence is that He may save them; but when the Spirit is quenched, there is no more possibility of salvation, therefore His purpose is frustrated. Such people must do much harm to others; so in pity to others probably God takes them away. I trust it will never fall to the lot of any of you to watch such a one die. Much more do I hope

that you may not die so yourself; and, oh! that there may be no danger of such a terrible fate, yield *now*. “Now is the accepted time.” You know not how much longer the Spirit may strive. You know not how nearly God’s patience may be exhausted. You know not but the refusal of this invitation may fill up the measure of your iniquities, and seal your doom for ever. Oh, I beseech you, quench not the Spirit.



THE NEED OF ATONEMENT.

THE NEED OF ATONEMENT.

ROMANS iii. 26.—“ *That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*”

WE spoke, last Thursday night, especially on the misunderstanding of the scheme of redemption, as having been the cause of the indifference of a great many (especially intelligent people) to the subject of religion; that false and contradictory theories thrust upon them had shocked and insulted their reason, and repelled them from the subject altogether.

We remarked that if the Gospel had been put in a straightforward, manly way, many would have been led to examine it, and that would have ultimately led to their salvation; but that it had been put in such contradictory ways, so repugnant to the common sense and conscience of mankind, especially with respect to the character of God, that numbers had rejected it: and that it was presented as a weak, effeminate thing—all the masculine side gone out of it.

We said all would be agreed on one point; namely, that men have generally the consciousness of being morally wrong. Amongst the numbers I have spoken to personally, during these last twenty years, on the concerns of their souls, I do not remember more than five or six that have maintained that they were perfectly right. Unregenerate people KNOW they are wrong, and admit it. They say, ‘I know I am not what I ought to be, or what I might be.’ There is a

universal consciousness that we are gone away from the straight line of rectitude which every man's conscience tells him he ought to walk by.

We said that God's scheme of redemption recognised this fact, and that it came to us, meeting us just where we stood, as fallen, free moral agents; that God had not ignored this fact,—had not put a scheme before us which was not adapted to our present circumstances,—had not required of us what was impossible to render in our present circumstances; but that the scheme of redemption was a scheme adapted to us in the moral condition in which it found us.

We remarked, further, that God did not require to make any change in the make of us. A scheme of theology has been thrust upon mankind which implies that God must alter human nature in order to save it. I do not mean altering it in its moral quality—making it righteous instead of sinful—but altering its constitution, saving us not as *men and women*, having all the capacities, propensities, and affections of humanity; that we must, so to speak, be reorganised before God can save us. If I understand the Gospel, it makes no such assumption, and comes to us with no such requirements. It was HUMANITY THAT FELL, and it was HUMANITY that needed to be restored. It was MAN who fell, and God proposes to restore MAN.

We went on to remark, that this scheme of redemption proposes to do just what we need; namely, TO PUT US RIGHT AGAIN. It is an indispensable condition of a moral agent's being happy, that he should be RIGHT. If we could be transplanted before the throne of God, retaining a sense of wrong in ourselves, feeling that we were out of harmony with the

laws of the universe, and with the mind and will of God, we should be as miserable as we should be in hell, because it is not the surroundings that make people happy, but the state of their hearts; and I fancy we should feel worse in the insufferable light of the Glory-land, with a sense of moral impurity, than we should in the darkness of hell itself.

What a misunderstanding of the Gospel scheme there is at this point! How people separate what God does for us outwardly through the sacrifice of His Son from what He does for us inwardly by the operation of His Spirit! and, therefore, there is a notion abroad of a sort of make-believe religion, as though God would count us righteous, and deal with us as if we were righteous, while He leaves us *unrighteous*. We tried last week to show that God would, in the first instance, JUSTIFY us as unrighteous people, but that, at the same time, He would put His Holy Spirit within us, and “RENEW us in the spirit of our minds”—in short, transform us from sinners into saints.

Now, we want to show how the Gospel does this.

How does the Gospel thus restore us to harmony with ourselves, harmony with moral law, and harmony with God?—as God does everything—by adapting the means to the end—by adapting the Gospel to our needs. God, as it were, comes to me, a guilty, fallen, moral agent, and says, ‘I want to pardon you, to bring you back again, not only to what you were before, but a great deal in advance of that. I want to save you; but there is one thing indispensably necessary before I can do this, and that is, that I shall maintain the dignity and the righteousness of My law—I must

vindicate the law which you have broken before I can pardon you.'

It is self-evident that before God can pardon and restore the sinner, He must vindicate His own law, that this was necessary in THE NATURE OF THE CASE. I think persons often forget this when they talk about God not requiring an atonement, as though it were *a mere personal matter* with God. They regard it as though it were an arbitrary arrangement on His part; they do not look at the nature of the case; they do not look at the surroundings, at all the issues, or they would not think that God could set at nought His law. To pardon the transgressor at the expense of righteousness would be a greater loss than gain.

Take an illustration from human affairs. Here is a man who commits some serious breach of the law of this land. Now, there are two things to be considered, The value of law consists in its sanctity in the minds of those who are under it, and in breaking the law there is a violation, an outrage committed against the conscience of every being in this kingdom who respects and holds the law to be sacred. Here is a man who commits a diabolical murder. What is the feeling of the whole country? Every human being who has come to the age of reason cries out for an atonement. Something penal must be exacted, suitable to the magnitude of the offence; you cannot pacify the public conscience without it. To pardon that transgressor, without any atonement for the violation of the law, would outrage universal conscience *further than the crime itself*. The conscience of every man and woman says that law must be appeased, vindicated, held up. Why? First, as a satisfaction to the sense of justice

which has been outraged ; and, secondly, as a safeguard that others shall not transgress. When the law ceases to have penalties, it ceases to be law, and becomes merely good advice, or counsel. The very idea of law implies some penal consequences if it be broken, and it ceases to be law when that idea goes out.

Now, if God were to sustain any government at all in the universe, He must necessarily have a law ; it could not be sustained otherwise ; and from all we know of the character of God, of the workings of God, in nature, how He loves law, and how law-abiding He is in all His operations—judging from all this, there is no doubt that the one great moral law which He has written on the tables of our hearts, written in His Book and in His Gospel, operates in heaven, and everywhere else where He reigns—it is the great moral law of the universe.

One of God's creatures breaks it ; what is to be done ? Satan broke it, and God has let him reap the penalty of his transgression.

But now man transgresses, and God wants to save man. Why God *wanted to save man in preference to angels*, I suppose we shall remain in the dark about in this world ; but, depend upon it, He had a reason, and a good one.* Thank His Name that He wanted to save us. But law was broken, and what was to be done ? Our sense of right had been shocked and grieved, and we could not pronounce it righteous if God should pardon the transgressor without some amends being made to the law. We could never make ourselves feel it to be right, any more than you could feel it to be right for Queen Victoria to pardon that murderer

without satisfaction being rendered to the law of this kingdom. You would say, ‘Monstrous injustice! If ‘this is going to be done, we shall not be safe in our ‘beds. There must be something done to magnify ‘and hold up that law in the estimation of the people, ‘or else we might as well have no law.’ And just so with the moral law. If God had pardoned the transgressor without an atonement, I say, then there would have ceased to be law, and you could not have pacified the outraged consciences of moral beings, in any part of the universe to whom the fact should be known; and universal anarchy, confusion, and rebellion might have ensued!

Then what was to be done? The law had been broken, and yet God wanted to save the offender. We answer, the law must have compensation, or the universe must be without law. God *must* have an atonement which will not only satisfy His justice, but that will appease and satisfy the outraged consciences of all moral beings.

He must have something that the *angels* will say, ‘Yes, that is enough.’ He must have something that the *devils* will say, ‘Yes, we can say nothing against that;’ and He must have something that the universal human conscience can appropriate as being SUFFICIENT to justify God in pardoning the guilty.

Now, who was there who could have offered such atonement? Man could not offer a ransom for his brother. I question if there is, in the eyes of God, any more valuable being in the universe than man. I do not know whether the angels are more valuable, in the scale of being, than man; the probability seems to be the other way. God created man in His own

image. Man seems to have been the darling of the Deity. His delights were with him, and the whole universe sang together at his creation, and *God has manifested* His extraordinary love for man by redeeming him, while He has left the angels *that fell to perish*.

But, supposing angels to be *more* valuable than man. They were only finite, created beings, whereas the law which had been broken was infinite and eternal, involving infinite and eternal consequences. Therefore, they were incapable of rendering an equivalent. If there had been another being in the universe capable of offering an atonement, doubtless God would have "spared His own Son;" but there was not, and therefore God spared Him *not*, but allowed Him to undertake the work, and the Son voluntarily gave Himself a sacrifice for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law.

Now, when we come to look into this question of atonement, does it look as unlikely and unreasonable as some people try to make out?

I acknowledge the stupendous character of the sacrifice. I acknowledge the wonderful *stoop* it was of the Divine Son to undertake it. I think I appreciate His love and goodness as much as any; but I feel as if, after all, we can understand a little about it. We can see how natural it was, that if the Father and the Son had created this favourite being, man, and had set Their hearts on him, as They evidently had, and if Satan had thought to circumvent them by tempting man from his allegiance, and working his eternal ruin—it seems no such unlikely or unreasonable thing that, as the Deity held council

and united to create man, so the Deity, foreseeing his fall, should hold council and unite to redeem him; and, as no other being was found equal to the necessity of the case that the Divine Son should undertake it, rather than this race which He had created should be lost, and Satan allowed to triumph in having circumvented the Divine purpose concerning it.

But it is more particularly on the manward side that I am looking at the atonement to-night.

Take one illustration of the necessity of a sacrifice valuable enough to appease conscience. It is a remarkable fact, and what everyone who has worked in the Lord's vineyard knows, that it is the *very last thing* you can get a sinner to do, to venture on the atonement, great as it is. When the Holy Ghost has opened the sinner's eyes to the enormity of sin, quickened his conscience to perceive his condition before God, it is only by the most persistent exhibition of the greatness and sufficiency of the atonement that you can get his conscience to take hold of it, and appropriate, and be pacified by it.

Oh, how wonderfully has God guarded the sanctity of His law by putting human conscience on its side! Such an awful thing does it look to the awakened conscience that the law has been broken, that it is the very last thing you can do to get the sinner to accept even THE SON OF GOD as a sufficient atonement. I have often said, as a last resort, to sinners writhing in the agony of conviction, and groaning under a retrospect of their lives, and an apprehension of the consequences which their guilt has entailed, 'Was not the sacrifice enough? when they have

said, ‘Oh, you don’t know how guilty—you don’t know how bad I have been; I do not believe anybody was ever as bad as I have been.’ I grant it all; but was not the sacrifice sufficient? Do you ever stop to think WHO WAS THE SUFFERER? He was the Son of God! Is not that enough?

I said to a lady, only a few days ago, ‘If God accepted the sacrifice as enough to atone for your sins, and to justify, and vindicate His law, will *you not accept it?* Will you not take the broken, bleeding body of your Saviour, as it were, and look up into the face of God, and say, ‘It is enough Lord! He suffered enough to atone, even for *my* sin!’ Oh, it is a blessed thing when the sinner comes to that; when the Holy Spirit exhibits before him the greatness and sufficiency of the atonement, so that he accepts it, and rests upon it; then conscience is satisfied, and the peace of God fills the soul. Account for it how you will, there is a fear in the human conscience that, somehow or other, it is not SAFE for God to pardon offenders. Conscience cannot feel that He may do it consistently, with His relation as God, and we have to get conscience to comprehend that the Son has paid the ransom before the soul will venture on it. The blood of bulls and goats, the blood of men or angels, would not have met the case!

Then we can see the absolute necessity for an atonement. Who, with any due estimate of his guilt, dare presume on the pardon of God without one? You may think you dare; but, my friend, when your eyes are opened to the importance and sanctity of the Divine law, your conscience will cry out for a sacrifice. Hence, no matter how advanced in holiness, every dying saint

rests his soul on the blood of Christ. Millions have died, ignoring every other claim or plea but the blood ! And in all cases of the conversion of infidels or atheists, no matter how violent has been their opposition to the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice, they are compelled to take refuge under the cross, and in no other way can their consciences find rest or peace ! Conscience must have the assurance that God can be JUST, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly. This necessity lies deep down in our own nature ; even the heathen feel it, on whom revelation has never dawned ; hence they offer the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul, and inflict on themselves unheard-of tortures and cruelties. They feel that they are transgressors, and that they need something wherewith to appease justice, and so they try to make atonement for themselves. This necessity is so universal in man that those systems of religion which have not recognised and met it have made but little headway in the world, and must ultimately, with all others which fail to meet the innate crying needs of the soul, dwindle and die.

Sinner, the sacrifice of Christ meets your deepest need. God has not blinked the fact of your uttermost guilt. He has looked the subject all round, and met the whole case by letting His Son, the eternal Word, offer a sacrifice which heaven, earth, and hell pronounce to be enough ! Now you may safely venture your guilty soul on the virtue of that blood ; and the Divine benevolence can consistently run to meet you at the cross ! “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” Will you come and meet Him in His own appointed method ? Once more I beseech you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. Lay down

your weapons of rebellion ; give up your suspicion and mistrust ; accept the offering which your Father has accepted *for* you, and be at one with Him. The Lord help you ! Amen.

Think, O Jesus, for what reason
Thou enduredst earth's spite and treason,
Nor me lose in that dread season.

Seeking me Thy worn feet hasted ;
On the cross Thy soul death tasted ;
Let not all Thy toils be wasted.

Look from heaven, Thy glorious mansion,
See me weep in deep contrition,
Weep and yield in full submission.



HIS WRATH

HIS WRATH.

REV. vi. 17.—“ *For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* ”

THERE have been some terrible days of wrath in the past history of this world. That was a day of wrath when, wearied by the cry of their sins and iniquities, the Lord rained fire from heaven on the guilty inhabitants of Sodam and Gomorrah. What consternation and dismay must have seized them when they beheld the first fiery strokes of His vengeance! What a change in their feelings, they who had thought themselves and their deeds of darkness so hidden from the eye of God and from the strokes of His justice—they who had revelled in their iniquities, laughed at His threatenings, and mocked the prophecies of His vengeance! How must they have quailed and howled as each torrent of fire fell on their devoted heads! It was a day of vengeance, a day of wrath.

That was a day of wrath, also, when God resolved on punishing the earth by sweeping it at once of its crimes and its inhabitants,—when He could no longer endure their evil imaginings and open rebellion, and when He burst the boundaries which He had set for the great deep, opened the sluices of the skies, and rained down death and destruction on all flesh. What wringing of hands and shrieks for mercy must have mingled with the roar of the

angry floods, as thousands after thousands sank to rise no more ! That was a day of wrath !

That was a day of wrath, too, when, after ages of forbearance and merciful interposition, long-threatened judgment overtook the Jewish people, and God let loose upon them their inveterate enemies, armed with all but supernatural power, to torment and destroy. Long had His mercy put off the vengeful day—for many generations had He sent them messengers and prophets, and last of all His Son, whom they rejected and slew, which filled up the measure of their iniquities and brought on them such tortures as had not been since the world began, nor shall be again till the last great day of wrath. Josephus tells us that 1,100,000 perished in the siege, that 115,880 dead bodies were carried out of one gate of Jerusalem in two and a half months. When Titus, in going his round along the valleys, saw them full of dead bodies, and the putrefaction running from them, he gave a groan, and, spreading his hands to heaven, called God to witness that this was not his doing. Their sufferings by famine were even worse than this death. We are told that when the Romans came within the walls and had begun their work of plunder, they found the upper rooms of the houses full of corpses. They stood in horror at the sight, and went out without touching anything. The awful prophecy that the mother should eat her own child was then fulfilled, and men gnawed their tongues for pain, and sought for death as a refuge from their misery. Truly that was a day of wrath !

These were all great and terrible visitations of the righteous vengeance of God against sinners. But they bear but a faint resemblance to the day which is

coming, when there shall be a revelation of His judgment against all the unrighteousness and ungodliness of man from the beginning to the end of time. What a day that will be—who can conceive or describe?

There are two or three characteristics of the wrath then to be revealed, which we want just to glance at.

First, it will be the wrath of God; and this will embrace the *soul* as well as the body. The wrath of creatures is sometimes very terrible; it can inflict untold sufferings on its fellow-mortal, but it cannot reach beyond the body. We have all heard of instances in which the bodies of our fellow-creatures have been tormented and racked by men of hellish disposition and their engines of as hellish construction, whose souls have been not only calm and peaceful, but joyous and triumphant. Man cannot forge a dart which can penetrate the soul that is at peace with God. He can imprison and afflict the body, but the soul can mount and sing in spite of all his wrath and malice. But who shall endure God's wrath? For it not only "drieth the bones," but it "drinketh up the spirit." Indeed, its principal sphere of action is the soul; and it seems only just that that which has been chief in sinning should be greatest in suffering. We all know that it is the soul that sinneth; the body is only the instrument of the soul, it only does what the soul bids, and in some instances the greatest sins are committed by the soul alone, consequently the soul must be the principal sufferer. Hence, Christ, in bearing our punishment, though His body suffered in a violent and painful death, suffered chiefly in His soul. He said to His disciples, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto

death," hours before He suffered any bodily anguish ; and we are told He was in an agony, and sweat great drops of blood which ran down to the ground. Now what was it that thus wrought upon the spotless soul of Jesus ?—

IT WAS THE WEIGHT OF HIS FATHER'S WRATH AGAINST SIN.

He was standing for us, in our stead, suffering in His soul the infliction of the justice of God against sin. It was this which drank up His Spirit, and made Him utter that exceeding loud and bitter cry. Now, if the wrath of God were so terrible to the Son of God Himself as to put Him in such an agony, what will it be to the undone sinner in the great day of wrath ? Well might our Saviour say, " Fear not them which kill the body, but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Neither angel nor devil can affright or torment the soul but by God's permission. He is Lord of the soul of man ; He created it, and He alone has power over it. Well might the Psalmist say, " Who knoweth the power of Thine anger ? " No creature can conjecture the weight of God's wrath on the soul. Whatever comes direct from God is most stupendous, whether in the way of mercy or judgment. His love and mercy are infinite and unsearchable, and so is His wrath. The weight of His little finger is heavier than the loins of man. God sometimes in this life lets in His wrath into the soul, filling it with terror and dismay, so that it becomes intolerable. Thus it was with Judas. The wrath of God filled his conscience with such terror that he could not bear it, but hanged himself to be rid of

the burden, forgetting that he was rushing into greater terror still. So it has been with many a sinner who has cried out in death, 'I feel already the torments of hell; I will not die, I dare not die.' But whatever of the wrath of God sinners have ever felt here, it is light in comparison with what is to come hereafter—it is, as it were, only a sip from the top of that cup of fury, the dregs of which all the wicked of the earth shall wring out and drink.

Oh, sinner, consider *whose* wrath it is that you are treasuring up against the day of wrath. If it were the wrath of men, angels, or devils, it would be bad enough but it is the wrath of the *Almighty God*. God Himself will come out of His place to punish you—His own mighty hand will deal the blow—His awful voice pronounce the sentence. It must be so. It is according to His impartial justice that it should be so, for all your sins have been against HIM. Though you sinned against the creature, yet the first and greatest of every kind of rebellion is against God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Therefore it is meet and right that He Himself should punish you.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE DAY OF HIS WRATH
IS COME?

But I want you to note, further, that this wrath will be JUST WRATH; it will be in exact accordance with every man's guilt. John says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS." Those who knew their Lord's will and

did it not, are to be beaten with many stripes ; but those who knew not, with few stripes. Not only will this wrath be just, but the sinner will be made to feel and acknowledge it to be so ; his conscience will take sides with God, and in spite of his feelings pronounce this wrath to be just. Conscience is a witness of God's own appointing ; it stands, as it were, an impartial judge between God and the sinner. You cannot bribe your conscience even now to swerve one iota from the light that is in it—you cannot make it say that is right which it feels to be wrong. You may refuse to listen to it, and you may act contrary to its teaching ; but it will mutter its condemnation in your soul, and right miserable it often makes you even here. What an *awful witness* to be against you in the day of wrath !

If, when God is beginning to let His wrath out upon you, you could cry, 'Stop, hold, listen, O Almighty Judge ! I am not guilty of this or that,' you might find some comfort. But conscience will make you speechless, for it will bring every sin you ever committed to your remembrance, and will say Amen to every charge which is brought against you. Conscience will be the most terrible witness which can appear against a man in that day, because it KNOWS ALL ABOUT HIM, just as God does. It is the only witness in the universe which knows so much. The Devil knows a good deal about wicked men, but even he does not know so much as their own consciences for he does not know their secret thoughts and motives, as conscience does.

You see, conscience is an INSEPARABLE COMPANION ; it goes with us wherever we go, and notes whatever we do. It is with us all through life, and in death ; and when the soul and body part, the soul and

conscience do not part, but go together into the next world ; so that its record exists for every moment of our lives, from the dawn of reason to the last thought in death. Paul may well ask, "Who knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him?" And, therefore, there is no one so proper to give evidence for or against a man in the great day of account as conscience. Hence God tells us He will judge every man according to the testimony of his conscience ; both saints and sinners shall stand or fall by its verdict. God will judge upon clear evidence according to those things written in the books of His own omniscience and in the book of the sinner's conscience. God will have one book and the sinner another, and both will agree to the letter. Sinner, this book is in your bosom now. You have been writing one of its pages to-day. Beware, it may be brought up against you in the great day of His wrath. Beware what you write in it to-night. You would be surprised to see how many entries it has already of mercy abused and rejected, calls unheeded, convictions stifled, opportunities trifled with, sermons forgotten ; mind what you add to this black catalogue, for you must either get it cancelled by the blood of Jesus, or add another occasion for wrath against the day of wrath. Ah, this will be the climax of your guilt, the centre on which the fire of God's vengeance will fix itself for ever and ever in your guilty soul, that

YOU REJECTED JESUS.

That after the wonderful love of God in redeeming you by the precious blood of His Son, you would not listen, submit, repent, and be saved ; but, in spite of

all He could do, would push your way down to eternal death. We are told that as the righteous take their places in glory they will sing, "Just and righteous art Thou, O King of saints." And, oh, methinks the first sentence that is groaned out by the lost sinner as he sinks into perdition will be, 'It is just.'

But, further, I want you to remember that it will be *uttermost wrath*—wrath unmixed with mercy.

Some of us have seen sinners drink terrible cups of suffering in this world; but we none of us ever saw one without some sweet in it. There is no calamity in this life without some alleviating circumstances, no pain without some palliative; hence the world has accepted the adage, "There is nothing bad but it might be worse." But this adage will be out of date when the great day of His wrath is come. Then the bad will be as bad as it can be; and the worst, the very worst, will have come. Now, the vilest of sinners may find mercy for the seeking—then, it will be too late even to ask for it. Mercy's term will have expired, and justice, and judgment will be the habitation of His throne for ever. There are many now who, when asked if they are prepared for judgment, say, 'Well, 'no; but you know God is merciful,'—intimating that, though they continue in sin and rebellion till death, God will be too merciful to send them to hell at last. They forget that He must be just as well as merciful and that there is but *one way* by which He can show mercy to the guilty, and that is through His Son to those who repent and accept Him. But these people refuse to repent, and reject God's only way of mercy, How will they dare ask for mercy then? It would be like the murderer asking for mercy when he gets to

the scaffold. The date of mercy will be out, the day of grace over, and nothing left but wrath and fiery indignation for ever, for, alas !

THIS WRATH WILL BE ALSO EVERLASTING !

Ah, if sinners or saints, or poets or philosophers, could only find any satisfactory evidence that this wrath would ever come to an end, what a jubilee there would be amongst the wicked both on earth and in hell ! But, sinner, remember that the same words are used to describe the duration of the misery of the wicked which are used to set forth the duration of the blessedness of the righteous—yea, and the duration of the existence of God Himself. He who was the embodiment of truth and love, who came to seek and to save us, and not to mock us by false representations of future woe, declares that “it is better to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.” And in another place He calls it “the fire that *never* shall be quenched.” And in speaking of the wicked in the last great day, He says, “and these shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Others may choose for themselves, but God forbid that you or I should make the fearful experiment of finding out the meaning of these awful words. Oh, my unsaved hearers, will you not be persuaded to flee from the wrath ? Mercy still holds out ; Jesus still shows His wounds and pleads His blood. Will you ground your arms, and take refuge under His cross ? Will you come and drink of the water of life freely ; or will you persevere in your rebellion and go on to drain the “cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath ” FOR EVER ?

SAVE THYSELF.

SAVE THYSELF.

LUKE xiii. 23-25.—“ *Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door.*”

THE man proposing this question in the 23rd verse, we may be sure, was actuated by a vain curiosity; it was a speculative question, which had nothing to do with his own salvation, so our Lord gave no direct reply, but seized the opportunity to turn the attention of the inquirer and those around Him to a subject infinitely more important to them than the relative number of the saved and the lost, even that of their own salvation. As though the Saviour had said, “What is it to you, how many will be saved or lost? The great question for you is, *Are you saved?* Till this is settled, you are in no position to speculate about the secrets of the future. Make haste to make your own calling and election sure.”

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” I would like to note, in passing, that this text is very commonly misread and misunderstood through an error in the punctuation. The full-stop at the end of the 24th verse should be removed to the middle of the 25th, and then the true meaning of our Lord’s words would come out. The text should read thus: “Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,

when once the master of the house hath risen up, and hath shut to the door." They will not be able to get in because they will be *too late* and the door will be shut, not because they had not strength to get in if they had tried in time.

Then you perceive that our Lord teaches most unmistakably in this passage that HUMAN effort is indispensable to salvation, and for this reason, that human obstacles have to be overcome.

I think every reader of the New Testament must have noticed two classes of passages bearing on the question of the conditions of our salvation, the one class representing it as an exceedingly easy thing to be saved: as for instance: "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," and "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "Look unto Me, and be ye saved," and so on, all of which texts represent one side, and a glorious side, of God's truth, but not the *only one*; whereas many teachers and preachers have culled all these texts, and made them almost the exclusive foundation of their teaching—even to the hoisting of placards in the streets, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," without any qualifying or explanatory texts. We can scarcely take up a religious book but we have this easy, one-sided Gospel preached to us; and we scarcely hold a service in which we do not meet some persons who have so thoroughly imbibed it that, say what we will, we cannot alarm or make them see the necessity of a change of heart and life.

Now I want carefully to look at both sides of the

truth relating to salvation, for this is a momentously important question; to be mistaken respecting it would be awful, and to mislead others still more awful!

I have said that the class of texts to which I have referred represent one side of truth, but that it is only one. You will find in your New Testament quite as many texts, quite as relevant, quite as important, and just as much inspired as the former class, which represent it as an exceedingly *difficult* thing to be saved, requiring as much of human effort and sacrifice as though salvation all depended on ourselves. Such is my text: Strive. We find this word would bear a stronger rather than a weaker interpretation. It would bear to be interpreted, "fight, wrestle, agonise to enter in at the strait gate." Why strive, if there are no difficulties? Why fight and wrestle if there are no enemies to be encountered? and why should it be written, as we read in the lesson, that except a man be willing to leave his father or mother, and even life itself, he cannot be—not he is not—but he *cannot become* the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? And again, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; and if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out?"

The Apostle Paul, in Acts xxvi., says he preached the same doctrine—"that men should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." But supposing this doctrine were confined to the teachings of Jesus Christ, I take all these to be prospective. Surely these texts do not refer to the men of His generation only. Did He not know what was in the human heart, and what would be the necessary conditions of salvation in the 19th century as well as in the first? And do not HIS conditions apply to all

people in all times? Evidently Paul and all the Apostles so understood and applied them.

If we look carefully and impartially at both sides of this question, we shall see that both these classes of texts are perfectly harmonious when looked at from the right point of view. If you take your friend's letter in order to discover his view of any question, every child knows that you must read it through, or else you cannot possibly judge what your friend means. It would be unfair and dishonest to read a part, and then give me a theory built on that part; you must read and *judge of the whole*. Just so with the Word of God. All that bears on the subject of our salvation must be read in juxtaposition. We must look at it all round, and then we shall arrive at the truth.

“Well,” you say, “but how do you reconcile these apparently contradictory texts?” I say that to my mind they present no difficulty whatever, simply because, if you will allow me the expression, I regard the former class as referring to God's side of the question, and the latter class as referring to man's side of the question. What a mercy it is, too, for those who are struggling after salvation to remember that there are no difficulties on God's side of the question. There might have been, and indeed there were once, difficulties against which we might have struggled all our lives, and we could never have overcome them. There was the barrier of the broken law, with its awful penalty, which we could never have removed out of the way; but when there was no eye to pity and no arm to save, His eye pitied and His own arm brought salvation, and by the glorious scheme of redemption He swept the difficulties on His side out of the way for

ever; He bridged the yawning gulf which sin had created between Himself and us, by throwing across it the broken body of His Son; and now, so far as God is concerned, the way is open and easy back again to His throne and to His heart. There is nothing more to be done on His side. Jesus Christ came from the loftiest throne in heaven, all the way down to Gethsemane and to Calvary, and took away every barrier on that side of the cross; and now God, as it were, stands at the cross ready and waiting to receive every sinner who will come to Him.

Nevertheless, there are difficulties in the way of the salvation of every human being, fitly demanding the utmost effort which he can put forth; for although on the Godward side of the cross all the barriers are cleared away, on the manward side we have need to strive and wrestle and agonise to get through the crowd which still intervenes.

If this be true, we can see the necessity for the exhortation of our text and of many similar ones to strive, to seek, to knock, to sell all to forsake all, to leave father and mother, and life itself, in order to save the soul. What a different idea such texts give us of our share in securing our salvation to that commonly entertained in these days! Many people seem to think that all they have to do is to sit still and wait for a wave of Divine influence or power, which will come and carry them into the kingdom of God without any concern or effort of theirs. Alas! I fear thousands wait till death cuts them down, and they find their portion with the idle and unprofitable servant in outer darkness.

Some of you have been trying this plan for years,

but you are as far from salvation as ever. How is this? There must be something wrong. God would never keep you waiting so long for a sense of His mercy and salvation if you were on the right track. Depend upon it, you are under a delusion of the Devil. If ever you are to be saved, you will have to bestir yourself; you will have to strive against those things which keep you back from the Cross. You are like the man who said, "Lord, I will follow Thee! but suffer me first to go and bury my Father." You have a "but," or it may be many "buts," in the way. Here is the great difficulty with many. They want to be saved without effort—without suffering. They are like some sick people we meet with sometimes, who go to the doctor and expect he is going to cure them without any self-denial or self-discipline on their part. They want him to write a prescription that will cure them straight off; and when he begins to ask them about their diet, and to order them to leave off this and to take that, or to practice the other—"Oh!" they say, 'am I to cure myself? I can't be at all this trouble.' And so thousands of people remain sick because they will not endure the self-denial and trouble which the regimen requires to cure them. This will not cure them without the physician. They require his treatment all the same; but all his prescriptions and treatment will not cure them without their co-operation. Your heavenly Physician has never proposed to cure you without your co-operation. He has never promised anybody to do so. And even when you are cured, you are to go on doing what He wills to will and to do *in you*, or you will soon fall back again, and make shipwreck, as thousands do. You will have

to go on, on your part, working out your own salvation to the end, abiding *in* Christ, and keeping His commandments, or you will fall back and become a withered branch. Salvation means co-operation with God all the way through, from the first ray of light till He bids you come up higher. So you see I do not profess to preach an easy gospel, or to bring you salvation without suffering and cross-bearing. I don't believe that anybody has ever found such a salvation, and I fear those who think they have will find themselves to have been utterly deceived at last. But I want to help those of you who are awakened, to strive and wrestle, to overcome whatever your "but" may be.

What is your "but?" That which represents in your case the man's father, whom he wanted to stop and bury; or the possessions of the young ruler, which Jesus told him to sell; or the honour which some of His hearers preferred to the honour that cometh from God only. These and kindred things are the obstacles and enemies against which men have to strive and wrestle in coming to the Cross; and your case will be no exception.

With many the great and, as they think, insurmountable hindrance is *worldly companionship*. They say, 'I see that if I choose Christ and His salvation, it means separation from all those I love best in the world.' As a young lady said to me a while ago, 'You see, I could not and *would not* be a hypocrite. I know what a real disciple ought to be, and how he ought to live, and I will never try to hold Christ in one hand and the world in the other as nearly all the Christians do, with whom I am acquainted; therefore I must

•leave every soul I know, and walk in a separate path.' Alas ! how truly these words echo the wail of thousands of young people of both sexes. God does not leave Himself without a witness in their hearts. Notwithstanding the rotten teaching many of them listen to, and the rotten practice they are forced to see around them, the Spirit of God sounds His own alarm in their souls. He convinces them of it, "of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*." He brings to their remembrance the words of Jesus ; He exhibits His claims upon them ; He shows them what it is to be a "true disciple ;" but instead of a warm, tender, separated, holy parentage, and Church, holding out their hands to the convicted soul and helping it over the bar of its worldly difficulties, they say, ' Oh, you are too scrupulous ; your 'conscience is too sensitive ; you are *morbid* ; you are 'extreme ; you can be a Christian without all that ; 'the world is different now to what it was in the days 'of Christ and of Paul. There is no harm in this, and 'there is no harm in that,' until the young awakened soul either fritters away its convictions, puts out its light, and becomes such a one as themselves, or turns back in disgust from the pitiful caricature, and goes headlong into the world. I charge it on thousands of half-hearted, inconsistent, world-loving parents, that *they* are the deceivers and destroyers of their children's souls ; and I charge it on thousands of lukewarm, backslidden, lucre-dried Churches, that when their children ask an egg they give them a stone—or a fish, they give them a serpent. The very vitals of Christianity are gnawed away by the vermin of Antinomianism. There is nothing left that fits or meets a soul really quickened by the Spirit of God. Such a

one must either consent to walk alone or put out his light. My young friends, listen to the voice of the Spirit WITHIN YOU. Accept of no compromise between Christ and the world. You had better go back, as the young ruler did, than become a hypocrite, and lose both worlds. The conditions of discipleship remain unaltered. "If any man come to Me, and hate not" (is not willing to give up, if fidelity to Me requires it,) "his father and mother, and his own life also, he CANNOT BE My disciple." Jesus claims from first to last to be first in your love, your interest, your service. He never pretends to claim any less, and broadly says again and again, that whoever withholds this allegiance must forego all claim to His love and mercy for ever. You cannot keep your ungodly companions and have Jesus. Now, make your choice; but, oh! remember, I beseech you, that one hour of His love and peace will be worth more to you than a lifetime of empty vanity and mirth. True, you must lose some whom you love; but your love for Him, and His love to you, will make up a hundred-fold for what you lose. Think also that, although you must forsake your companions so far as worldly fellowship and enjoyments go, yet your soul shall be filled with Divine love and pity, which will vent itself in efforts to save them; and perchance you may win some of them to become brethren beloved in the Lord; and thus you shall not only save yourself, but those for whom Satan would have you sell your soul. All companionship out of Christ is a snare and a curse; and the more *refined and fascinating*, the bigger the curse! Flee from all those who "love not the Lord Jesus Christ," except to try to save them. Confer no longer with flesh and

blood. Up, and fly for your life. Strive! wrestle! agonise! Parley not with any Delilah, Herodias, or Drusilla! "Come out from among them, and be ye "separate, and I will receive you, and will be a FATHER "unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, "saith the Lord Almighty."

Remember, also, that you will find companionship (if you seek out true saints) far more tender, and precious, and profitable, than any you can possibly give up, and such as will be welcome when you *are dying*, and which will last for ever.

Another great hindrance with many is *unlawful gain*. I once knew a gentleman who was deeply convicted and wanted to be saved, but he was engaged in an unlawful business. He came to our meetings for about seven weeks, when the controversy in his soul reached such a height that he could scarcely sleep or eat. He said, 'I have a large capital involved, and I cannot consent to become a poor man.' His teachers would allow of no compromise, knowing that such a course would damn his soul; and so at last, when driven almost to despair in trying to persuade God to save him while holding on to his idol, he resolved that, business or no business, rich or poor, he would follow his Saviour and save his soul. Accordingly, he came out amongst the seekers of salvation; and scarcely had his knees touched the ground, when his soul was set at liberty, and he went away praising God!

You see, at last he embraced the cross, submitted to suffer if so the Lord permitted. He strove, agonised with himself, and would not give in till he had overcome his enemy and won Christ. So must you if you

are entrammelled in any net of unlawful gain. There are no bonds harder to break, perhaps than these. "The love of money is the root of all evil." I used not to understand that text, but I do now. I meet with people all over the land who have sold their souls over and over for money, who sell their sons and daughters, body and soul, for money—nay, who sell Jesus Christ over again for money. Money is the idol which they have set up, and before it they worship and sacrifice day and night. Has the Devil got any of you into a trap of unrighteous money-making? Man, you have only the shadow of a chance for your soul. Up! up! strive! agonise! Look into hell. Think *how long* eternity will be, to spend in reckoning up the profits on broken hearts, wrecked brains, murdered bodies, and lost souls! Such reckonings are bad enough on a sick-bed, are they not? It takes a lot of the Devil's opiates to compose you to sleep after them; but what will they be, to go *over and over for ever* in the light of the flames of the bottomless pit! Oh, dishonest man, strive now, and resolve to conquer or die! Your only chance is in one desperate leap away from your gains through the strait gate.

Another hindrance with many in this day is *frivolous, trashy reading*. In a series of services in the North of England, a gentleman came every night for about a month, and was excessively miserable; he was a member of a Church, and a man of influence in the town. He stopped to the prayer-meeting every night, and friends talked to him, and tried in every way to find out his difficulty, but in vain. One night I went to him, as a sort of last desperate effort, for I felt deeply concerned about him. I said to him, 'My

‘friend, are you not afraid of quenching the Spirit by ‘this attitude?’ He said, ‘Yes, I am; but you’ve hit the right nail to-night.’ I said, ‘Have I? Say, the Lord has hit it. Will you let it be effectual?’ He said, ‘You would never suspect what has been my ‘besetment, which has kept me from the enjoyment of ‘the peace and love of God. It has been novel-reading. ‘Many a night I lie reading till daylight that accursed ‘trash, and I could not make up my mind to give it up, but I have to-night;’ and he arose and followed me to the penitent form, and got saved in a few minutes.

He wanted no more teaching, he just yielded the controverted point. You see, he had to “strive”—to do battle with himself—in resolving to deny himself that sinful indulgence; then salvation came to his soul. If anybody here is thus held captive by the same snare, go and do likewise. Never *expect* to find Jesus, while your mind is preoccupied with the husks and trash of foolish worldly literature. The fact that you can relish such stuff, proves that you are far too worldly and indifferent to seek in such a way as to be likely to find the pearl of great price.

With others the hindrance is *indulgence in strong drink*. The Spirit of God has shown them the soul-ruining character of these drinks, and that their use is incompatible with their serving Him; but they hesitate, and argue, and try to make themselves believe that this is too small a matter to keep them out of the kingdom of God. I knew a gentleman who was kept out of peace and joy for fifteen years through indulging in a couple of glasses of wine per day. He felt that he ought to wash his hands of the evil thing, but he

refused to do it. He did not "strive;" he shrunk from the self-denial, and so lost the joy of salvation! And, oh! how many knowingly sell their souls for drink! These say to us sometimes, 'You don't know 'the dreadful power of this appetite; it is too strong 'for me.' We might answer, 'Why did you create it? 'but seeing that you have done so, now your only 'chance of salvation is in a determined and desperate 'leap right out of its clutches at once; if you parley, 'you are undone.' You say, 'But I shall suffer so.' Very likely; even salvation does not prevent people reaping the physical consequences of their sins, but you must *embrace the suffering*. Strive, man, strive. *Eternal life is at stake.*

The suffering will only "endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Supposing you had to suffer and wrestle with this appetite all your life, what would that be compared to an eternity of peace and joy? Is it not *better* to enter into life halt or maimed, if need be, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire? But the suffering in your case will only be short, a month or two of "striving" with the physical appetite, and you will be a free man for the rest of your life. Will you be such a COWARD as to lose your all, for want of this bit of wrestling? If God is willing to pardon the past, and to help and strengthen you for the strife, will you sit down and say, 'I can't?' God forbid! Arise and take hold of His strength. Who knows but He may deliver you even from the physical craving? He will if you will trust Him to do it, and you shall "walk, and leap, and praise God." We have hundreds of men in the Salvation Army who have been the veriest slaves of

drink for years, living and working only to get drink, who testify that, at a certain hour of a certain day, God did work this mighty miracle in them, and that from that hour they have neither *craved* nor *missed* the deadly draught. Will *you* strive with your appetite so far as to bring it to Jesus to be cast out? The Lord help you!

Another hindrance with many is *worldly amusement*. They are so far awakened as to perceive that all those pastimes and recreations from which *God is excluded* are contrary to Scripture, and deadening and injurious to their religious impressions. The Spirit warns them to have no fellowship with the world, if they wish to find Him who was not of the world, and who declared that His disciples were equally not of the world. They realise all this; but instead of coming out from it and being *separate*, they try to trim and compromise and thus spare themselves the conflict which a decided course would bring upon them. They “love the praise of men more than the praise of God,” and so they go here and go there, and do this and the other which their consciences tell them is wrong, rather than *suffer* and strive. If any of you are in this case, don’t you see there is but one way for you—EMBRACE THE CROSS. You can *never be saved till* YOU GIVE UP THE WORLD! Settle that, and then weigh the world in one scale, and your soul—your eternal destiny—in the other, and apply yourself to solve our Lord’s problem, “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

There are many other hindrances that intervene between awakened sinners and their Saviour; in fact, every soul has a “but,” Will you put your “but”

under your feet, and say, 'Lord, I WILL FOLLOW THEE, and leave the dead to bury their dead?' Will you? Do you say 'It is so hard?' Yes, it looked hard to the young ruler; but we can see now what an infinite gainer he would have been by the loss of all things—how great a gainer, eternity alone can unfold. Satan draws his great black wing over all the gain. He tries to hide from our view the peace, and gladness, and glory that God has in store for us when our choice is made. The prodigal did not know that his father would put on him the best robe, and give him the kisses of his love, till he *came home*. The silver lining is on the inside of the cloud; you must pass through before you can see it. There never was a saint yet who did not count *whatever* he might have sacrificed in order to win Jesus as dung and dross compared with his infinite gain. But, oh! how ashamed many have been to think that they could have hesitated or argued for a moment with such a prize in view! Having Him, truly we possess all things. Some of you have written me that you want to find Him. Will you let go the "but?" Will you pass through the crowd and come now and touch the hem of His garment? If so, you shall be healed of whatsoever plague you have, and songs of praise and thanksgiving shall well up from your satisfied soul continually. But you must press through; you must wrestle and struggle, not with Him, but with yourself and your sins, to get at Him. Will you strive to enter in?

Strange that some people have the idea that there is some merit attaching to this strife! Was there any merit in the woman's pressing through the intervening crowd in order to get at Jesus? There certainly was

great *wisdom* and some courage, but I cannot see any merit ! Was there any merit in the prodigal, when on the verge of starvation, starting to go to his father ? Certainly, if he had *not* gone, he would never have been taken in ; but I cannot see that his going merited his reception ! What merit can there be in throwing away our husks and rags in order to be taken in and fed and clothed with the best there is in our Father's house ? Surely the merit is all on the Father's side ; but it is a *condition* of His receiving us that we leave all of ours, to receive of His.

Suppose a man in the water yonder, struggling and battling with the waves. He wants to get out, but he cannot. The more he struggles, the sooner he sinks ; he cannot save himself. There is a man on the shore who sees his situation, and by great effort and sacrifice procures a rope, which he throws within the grasp of the drowning man, crying aloud, "Clutch the rope, and I will save you." But the man has something in each hand—perchance a bag of gold in one, and the title-deeds to an estate in the other—and he answers back, "I can't let these go. Can't you save me *with* these ? What should I do without my money ?" The man on the bank cries, "Man, you are drowning ! If you don't clutch the rope, I cannot save you ; let those things go, and save your life." The man feels that he is sinking, and at the last moment he lets his treasures go, and seizes the rope, and is pulled to shore.

Now will any sane person say that his action *merited* his rescue, or that he *saved himself* ? Will not all the newspapers and everybody else give the credit and the praise of his salvation to the man on the bank ? Of course they will, and properly so ; but twenty men on

the bank could not have saved the man without his *own co-operation*. He had to sacrifice his idols, and hold on to the rope. He had to “strive” with himself against his love of money and of ease, and embrace the means provided for his rescue. Just so, sinner, if you will be saved, you must FIGHT YOURSELF. Your indifference, your presumption, your selfishness, your worldliness, your unbelief: you must wrestle your way in spite of all these barriers to Jesus. He has procured the rope of salvation, and now throws it once more within your grasp! Will you clutch it? will you let go those idols? will you cut off and cast away from you every hindrance, and spring for your life? If you *sit still*, you will *be lost*. If you awake and ARISE from the dead, Christ will give you light, and you shall be saved; but all the praise and the glory will be due to Him, without whose blood and sacrifice you might have striven for ever without hope.



A TRUE AND A FALSE
PEACE.

A TRUE AND A FALSE PEACE.

JER. vi. 14.—“ *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*”

PEACE is the universal want of man. Everywhere and always the race is in a state of unrest, “tossing like a troubled ocean,” seeking rest and finding none. Consequently, men adopt many counterfeits, and try to satisfy the aching void of their souls with the opiates of Satan.

Let us look for a moment at the nature of true peace. Peace is not a state of mere quietness or insensibility. Alas! many are in this state of torpor; and when you ask them about their souls, they say, ‘Oh, yes! I have a hope; I have a measure of peace. I hope I am right.’ But when you try to shake them up, and find out whether they have any thorough foundation for their peace, they don’t want to be disturbed. But peace is not insensibility to existing differences between the soul and God; for in such a condition there are all the elements of awful and eternal warfare, and there only needs a change of circumstances in order to land the soul in conflict, distress, and desolation. We do not mean *that* sort of peace. True peace, Divine peace—the only peace that will do to die with—arises out of a settlement of our differences, and a cessation of hostilities towards God, and reconciliation between the soul and God, bringing assurance and

quietness in view of both the past, present, and future. But let us look at one or two false methods by which Satan lulls the souls of both sinners and backsliders into a false peace.

First. He gets them to make *a false estimate of the character and deserts of sin*. When God's Spirit wakes them up, puts before them their sins, convinces them of their heinousness and enormity, Satan comes and helps them to reason, and search for excuses. They say, as these Jews did by Ezekiel, "If we pine away in our iniquities, how should we then live?" They charged their sin back again upon God. They began to excuse themselves. They said his way was unequal; and when He charged them with wearying Him, they said, "Wherein have we wearied Thee?" When He charged them with robbing Him, they said, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" they made excuses for themselves in their sins.

And, oh, the multitudes that do so now! People want to make it out that they are dying for want of light. I say no. I won't allow my God to have that reflection cast upon Him. They are not dying for want of light; they are dying for want of *honesty*.

This spirit of finding excuses is most hateful in the sight of God. In the Old Testament, all the way through He is continually reproofing this spirit, and threatening his backslidden people with chastisement because of it; whereas He tells them, if they would confess and forsake their sins, they should be forgiven.

But we will look at one or two texts in the New Testament. Revelation ii. 5: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and

will remove thy candlestick out of his place, *except thou repent.*" Now, do you see the everlasting principle on which alone God can pardon sin laid down in the last utterances of the New Testament, as well as all through the Old, is repenting and forsaking of sin, and not excusing and covering it up?

Now, some of you are convinced that you are wrong, but the Devil is trying to get you into a false peace. He is saying, 'Well, but you were once right;' and so were these Jews. He is saying, 'You are a Christian;' and they were Israelites. 'Well, but you know you are the children of God;' they were the children of Abraham, and they *said* they were the children of God; but Jesus Christ said, 'The works of your father show whose children you are.' Whose works are you doing? My friends, don't let Satan deceive you, if you are LIVING IN SIN, no matter what Church you are a member of, no matter how long you have been a professor. Let the Holy Spirit search you; take God's way; don't begin to excuse yourselves. You can get *quietness* that way perhaps, but peace never! Would to God that every soul quiet in sin were awakened by an earthquake, like the gaoler, if nothing else would do! They say they have peace, but all the elements of everlasting warfare are ready to break out in their bosoms at any moment. Judas had quietness when he sold his Master. There does not seem to have been a blush of shame, or even a tremor, in receiving the thirty pieces of silver. But wait! All the elements of war were in his bosom; and when the bitter consequences of his crime came upon him, his conscience was touched as with the fires of hell, and he went out and hanged himself. Do you call that peace? No;

he was in a state of torpor until the full measure of his guilt burst upon him; but that was not peace. Do not confound quietness with peace.

Another method by which people get false peace is *stifling their fears and convictions*. They not only excuse sin, but they resolutely resist what God Almighty is doing to enlighten them. Multitudes of this class come to our Salvation Army meetings. God only knows how often I weep over them, and say, "Who hath believed our report?" They come, and we see by their faces, and by what they say to us, and the letters they write, that God is stirring their souls and making them realise that something is **WRONG WITH THEM**; but instead of going down under the searching of the Holy Spirit, and saying, 'Yes, 'Lord, here cut it out and make me right,' they stifle conviction, and say, 'Oh, no, no! it cannot be so bad. 'I am frightened by hearing those people; they are 'such extreme people!' Or, 'I have been harrowed 'up with bereavement, loss, or trial. I shall get 'all right by-and-by.' Anything but confession and renunciation of sin.

Ah! my friends, you may succeed in stifling your convictions. You may bury them in your own bosom, and go on for a while, perhaps a long while, but death will open the floodgates of hell on your poor soul. Oh! the deathbeds that our people are called to visit are enough to make the angels weep—people who have been burying their iniquities in their bosoms, instead of confessing and forsaking them, and getting saved over again—backsliders, who once knew God, many of them would get off their beds and hang themselves, if they could but get out of their misery.

There is only one way to deal with sin ; and that is, out with it, forsake it, and get it washed away. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord : and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Now, sinners or backsliders, you both have to come to it. My friend if you go down to Hell an unconquered, unrepentant, unpardoned sinner, on your soul will rest the responsibility.

Another false method by which sinners and backsliders try to get peace, is that of *adopting false views*. They say, 'I am not to look at myself, but at Christ. 'I have nothing to do with my feelings or dispositions ; 'I am to be saved by believing THE WORD. True, I 'am not living in obedience to God, but then WHO IS ? 'Nobody even professes to do so, except a few 'enthusiasts and fanatics. Salvation is not of works, 'and I am clinging to the cross, so I must be right. 'Certainly I don't understand what that inward "kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the "Holy Ghost " means ; but I belong to the Church, 'I take the communion and read my Bible, and pray 'morning and night.' And so, while the Holy Spirit is trying to awaken such people to their dangerous condition, they are trying to heal their hurt slightly, and crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Are there any of this class here ? My friend, there is only one way for you to find true peace, and that is to put away the *occasion of war* ! Where there is sin, there must be conflict and misery. God Himself cannot give peace to a soul holding on to sin, nor does He ever propose to do so. It is "your iniquities" that "have separated between you and your God ;" and before you can be restored to Him,

they must be repented of and put away. Give up trying to make yourself *believe* that you are right, and just *get right!* then your peace will flow as a river. Suppose that you were trying to believe that you were heir to some estate, and you go to a friend who is a lawyer, and say to him, ‘I think I am all right; I feel sure I am the heir. I have read the will, and I believe I am the person intended; I often feel quite comfortable about it, but at times I get nervous and fearful, and I think that, after all, perhaps I am mistaken.’ Your friend would say, ‘Well, but have you not got some proofs?’ And if you said, ‘No, I have no deeds, nor any *evidence* to show that I am the heir,’ he would say, ‘Then it is the height of folly for you to be building your hopes on the inheritance. But once *make good your title*, and then you need have no more misgivings.’ Just so spiritually look to your ground of claim. Get your title clear, and then you will have a well-founded, permanent peace, which neither man nor devils can take away. God does not leave His real people without an assurance of their saintship. He sends “the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they cry, Abba, Father.” And they “*know* that they have passed from death unto life.”

Another false method for trying to get peace, is *putting off the reckoning day*. I heard a lady say not long since, ‘The fact is, I have given up the struggle, and I hope somehow or other I shall get right when I am dying!’ Poor woman! that is an awful experiment—a forlorn hope indeed! You need to have all the powers of mind and body in full play when settling your accounts with God. Dying pains and distractions will be poor circumstances for making your peace with

Him, even if you were sure of the opportunity ; but the people to whom God has been showing His way of peace for years, and who have refused to obey, are not the people who get right when they are dying. Their hope is more likely to be cut off like that of the hypocrite, and their lamp to go out in darkness.

Then you say, if none of these are the right methods for getting peace, what is ? God's way is always effectual, and this is to put away sin. No power can give peace to a guilty being, except by taking away his guilt. Confess and FORSAKE YOUR SINS, and cast your guilty soul on Jesus, and then He will give you HIS peace, which will abide with you for ever. Amen.



WILL YOU OBEY ?

WILL YOU OBEY ?

GOD has been speaking all day, speaking in an unmistakable voice, speaking in the most direct and clearest possible way to many hearts.

He has been saying to them, ‘ Arise, and follow Me ;’ and our day of convocation will fail of its effect, notwithstanding the congregations—notwithstanding the beautiful, holy influence which we have had—notwithstanding the collections and the interest—it will fail of its effect if these souls do not obey that call and arise to-night to follow Him. We shall deem any less result but lost labour, and so will He.

He wants you. He wants your gifts. He wants your influence. He wants your money. He wants all you have, but He wants most of all *You ! You ! Everyone of you !* I don’t know where you sit, and I don’t know to what He calls you ; but the question to settle is, *Will you obey ?* Will you rise and follow ? Will you face whatever it is He calls you to face ? Shut your eyes ; never mind me. Look inside. Listen to the voice within. Face God and say, ‘ Yes !’ or ‘ No !’ Face Him. Oh, this everlasting swinging to and fro like the door on its hinges ! Oh, this coming up to the point, coming up to the brink, and then going back again into the wilderness ! Oh, this listening and thinking and saying ‘ I would like to—I wish I could—I will some day’—and then holding back ! It has

been the damnation of thousands. Oh, how it has robbed the kingdom of God! How it has robbed heaven! And how many thousands who might have been saved through the influence of those called, but unfaithful and disobedient ones, have gone to the bottomless pit.

Now what will you do? Will you obey the call? Will you arise and follow? Will you go over the river of decision? I know the reason many of you don't. You have got too much baggage. You have got something that you cannot take over with you. There is something God calls you to give up, to lay down, to cut off, and you halt and shrink and you say, 'Oh, if it were not for this I would go over. If it were not for this I would arise and follow Him. If I could only get rid of this; if I could only face that; if I could only embrace the other; then, I would arise and follow Him.' You have been sitting or standing there on the bank, some of you for weeks, some of you for months, and some of you for years. Now then, just face the fact that you never will get saved, you never will become what He wants you to be, till you do sacrifice that thing—till you do put your foot on that idol, till you do embrace that cross, till you do say in your inmost soul, 'Yes, Lord,' to that call, and then rise and follow Him. Now, will you say it?

Some of you, perhaps, say; 'It is very well for you people who have done it; you crossed and now it is an easy matter for you? But do you think that we have never had any sacrifices to make, or any rivers to cross since that day, never shrunk from crossing them, never doubted God's power to bring us through! no! but we have, we have.

Do not suppose that God does not keep demanding of us fresh sacrifices, and laying upon us fresh crosses. We are not asking you to do what we are not doing and are not willing to do ourselves. The Devil takes care that we shall not get it all smooth sea when we have once started. Do not suppose that. But we can tell you that whatever the sacrifice may be—however dear the idol may be to your bleeding heart; however much it may cost you to trample it in the dust, whatever suffering it may seem to involve—we can tell you that the gain will be ten times as much. You will not count it sacrifice. You will not count it a loss. You will glory as the Apostle did, in having accounted it but dung and dross, that you might win Christ and the excellency, and the glory, and the power, and the usefulness, and the success, and the heavenly fruit which He will give to you. The cost will be as nothing. But the Devil spreads his great black wing over all that God has in store for you. He hides it from your view, and only shows you what you will miss. Now then look over his wing or under it. Look at what you will gain. Think how you will gain deliverance from the wretched doubt and fear which have made you so miserable in years gone by; deliverance from that controversy which is always going on. Think of the rest that will come into your spirit. Think of the gladness that will fill your soul; the songs of freedom, of deliverance, and power, with which you will go forward to battle for Him. Think of having your tongue loosed to speak His praises. Think of having your heart set at liberty from seeking and fretting about your own, to care and weep over, and love, and seek, the salvation of others.

Think what the joy will be of having pearls to bring to your Lord—sheaves to bring to His garner, now and in the great eternal harvest home which is coming on.

Think of that and say whether you will not put down this petty, paltry hindrance; whether you will not rise and follow Him, now, this very moment.

Embrace the cross; sacrifice whatever it may be. Say, ‘Lord, I will arise and follow Thee. I do rise and follow Thee just now.’

Will you? Who will? Now, then, to be—what? An officer, perhaps. Well, you will never be happy any more if you hold back—never. As I said to somebody the other day, you might as well try to be happy in perdition, as to be happy in this life while you have that call in your soul and are refusing to obey it.

To be a soldier? It may be, to leave a business? Well, if you don’t, the business will curse you. It may be the giving up your child to be a Salvationist—an officer, perhaps, to be sent to some foreign land to suffer and die for Jesus. Well, if you withhold her, look out. God will perhaps whip you in that very child. God will make that child your punishment. Or does He ask you for a bit of money you have put away somewhere? If you don’t give it Him, it will eat your soul as a canker. You will never be happy till you do give it to Him.

Does He call you, young man, to leave father and mother, friends, and home, and go to a foreign land to try to bring the poor heathen into His kingdom. If you stop here, you will never be happy—never. You might just as well start at once. You will never have any more peace or rest till you obey that call. Oh,

the folly ! Oh, that I could demonstrate it to you as I have seen and realised it ! Oh, that I could show you the supreme foolishness of trying to be happy while you are fighting against God. Oh, that you would get up, determined, facing the consequences, and come out just as if Jesus Christ were here in His flesh, and were calling for volunteers, to go and be His witnesses to the ends of the earth—people who will come to Him and say, ‘ Here I am, Lord Jesus, to be Your saint and Your Soldier ? You who have been fighting against conviction, you who have been holding back, mocking God, lying to the Holy Ghost, by bringing part of the price, let this night end the wretched conflict. Come and give yourself fully to Him. The Lord help you ! Amen.



HOW TO CONSECRATE.

HOW TO CONSECRATE.

How is it that so many people go to meetings and hear about this consecration and faith, and then fail in carrying it out in their lives? What is the hindrance?

It seems to me that this is largely because they do not receive what God has revealed, as to what the life of His real followers ought to be. They fritter away the teachings of the Bible and of the Holy Spirit on this question.

I believe that the Spirit of God does show people how they ought to live, how they ought to labour, how they ought to sacrifice and suffer for the salvation of men; but instead of obeying His teaching and becoming co-workers with God, they say, 'Oh, that is too high for me; it will cost me too much; it will be too much trouble; it involves too much sacrifice. I cannot do it; I cannot receive that way of putting it.'

So they read books, or go to see those who are supposed to be leading Christians, in order to get a second opinion, after God has given them His opinion. They try and find excuses for themselves. They know sufficiently well what is God's will concerning them; but they try to find an easier way.

I am told that I have a practical mind, and I am glad I have. I hope I shall keep it to the end. I believe that any other kind of mind will be found to have been a snare, when we get before the throne of God; because Jesus Christ is going to be intensely

practical in that day. He is not going to say 'Inasmuch as ye *thought* it,' or 'Inasmuch as ye *felt* it,' or 'Inasmuch as ye *intended* it,' or 'Inasmuch as ye *promised* it,'—but He is going to say "Inasmuch as ye *did* it." I want to be among the doers, and I want you to be among the doers.

Now, dear friends, are you prepared to receive this life of absolute, practical bearing of the shame and the losses, the suffering and the crucifixion, involved in following the Christ? Are you willing to be cast out by fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law, aunts and cousins, from circles and society, and to be boycotted by those round about you, in order that you may thus follow Christ in the regeneration of the Spirit? Are you prepared to accept it? Do we all accept it?

Have you accepted God's version of the life of a saint, or are you seeking all round for excuses to make it a little easier? If the latter, then that fly in the pot will make all your ointment to stink, that flaw in the foundation will topple over any edifice of your resolutions and determinations, your promises, or prayers, or faith; and you will be no better for these meetings, but worse.

What we have to come to is to accept God's will for our lives; but in many cases people won't do this. They won't accept the hardship which following Jesus Christ involves; they like ease and comfort; but to follow Jesus Christ in the way He lays down involves a great deal of hard work. It involves the continual use of all our faculties, not allowing any of them to lie by to rust, not using any of them, either mental or physical, merely for our own gratification.

We are His servants, we are His children, we are His husbandmen, and He will demand the increase of all the faculties He has given us. Now, do we accept this? Are we willing to go and work hard for God? Are we willing to use our brains, making them think and plan and scheme for God, instead of for our own selfish interests? Are we willing to use our time, our influence, our money, for the promotion of His interests? If you are, you will make a mark on London and England in that one particular alone. Are we willing to use our families for this end? Oh, how guilty thousands of Christian parents will stand before God as to the purpose they have towards their families, the training they have given, and the use they have made of their children! It is not the first purpose of their hearts to train their children for God. Their great purpose is educating them after the elements and fashion of this world. They make it manifest by devoting six or seven hours a day to having them trained in earthly learning, as being the primary consideration, while they leave the impression on the minds of the children that the things that belong to the Kingdom of God are only secondary.

Do you accept God's plan for yourself, for your family, for your business, and for your money? Now this is the point; it is all contained in that. You must accept God's plan, you must choose it, and say, 'Yes, Lord, I will have this one ambition, motive and 'desire to live for Thee alone.' You must not only say it, but act it out. I affirm before you to-night, the Salvation Army, with its endless ramifications, its permanent results, and its influence upon the populations of the earth, is the result of the acceptance

of this principle by two single individuals and their determination to act them out in their own lives, and to so train and inspire their children that they also should act them out. If God can bring so much out of a couple of people embracing those principles and acting them out, without their knowing how He was going to do it, what could He not do with thousands of such people, if they would only put themselves in His Hands? What could He not do with you?

‘Ah, but,’ you say, ‘the circumstances are so different, we are such different individuals.’ How do you know? It is not the quality of the instrument you place in the hands of God which determines its usefulness; it is the full surrender you make of it; it is not the quality of the agent, but it is God’s having the full disposal, the undisputed sway, in using him. Sometimes it pleases God to do more with the weak instruments than He does with the strong ones. Will you let Him have you? What God wants is for you to put yourself thus practically into His hands. Now, we want this meeting to have this result; we want you to believe with that faith which produces action. Do you accept this plan? Are you willing to follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Are you willing to take that Harry, or that Mary of yours, and begin to-morrow a new plan of education—a new system of training—and to train those children only for God and His kingdom? That is the test.

Oh, I covet the children for God! This generation is at the best a poor mongrel affair. I want a generation trained from their babyhood for God, and inspired from the cradle with one ambition, that they are to live and suffer and die, if need be, for His glory,

and to have no other business but the extension of His kingdom in the world. You can make your children that, if you will. I am certain of it. I am as confident of it as that I stand here. You can make such children, if you will, if you are co-working with God. If you won't make your children hypocrites by teaching them sentiments which you never intend them to carry out; if you let their practice keep pace with what you teach, you will make them such, and God will use them as saviours of the world; but you must do your part. Will you begin to-morrow?

Will you begin with your business to-morrow?

How many of you business men, I wonder, have some matters that you count little things, that rise up in your consciences to condemn you? Perhaps it is not an unlawful business. But is there anything unlawful in your mode of doing it? Is there something about which your conscience is constantly saying 'You know that is not square, that is not right; 'you know you would not like Jesus Christ to 'investigate that!' Something which you would excuse by saying 'But I must live; I could not 'compete with that shop over the way, or with yonder 'manufacturer over the water, if I did not allow this; 'I must do it.' Where is the 'must?' That is one of the Devil's 'musts!' Jesus Christ did not say you 'must.' He said you 'must not.' He said you must obey Him and keep a conscience void of offence, and be able to look straight up into the face of your Heavenly Father and know that your ways please Him. Do you accept this with its consequences?

Never mind about competing with anybody. God does not keep you in the world to compete with all

the rogues and vagabonds in it, but to represent to the world Him, who was pure and spotless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and to assert and extend His kingdom in the earth. No man ever helped His kingdom by a single dishonest action, or by anything that would not bear His smile. Do you accept that. Will you go and begin to-morrow morning by putting out of your mode of doing business those things for which your conscience condemns you?

Will you say, 'Never mind whether I save or lose money, whether I prosper or fail? I am going to be a Jesus Christ man in my business and trust Him to look after the consequences.' Do you accept that.

You who work for God, do you accept God's choice for your service?

Oh, what stories I have revealed to me in letters from backsliders and others, who are hid away in holes and corners the world over, who have lost the favour and presence of God in their own souls and all power to serve Him. And how do you think they lost it? By refusing to obey God's call for some particular kind of work. They were willing to do anything else, but not that particular thing to which He called them. They were willing to shoulder any other cross, but not that particular one; and so they got wrong, and have been wrong ever since. They are wandering about as poor backsliders, because they would not do that work to which God called them. Now, some of you have a call in your heart to some special work or field. Do you accept it? If not, your faith will be but faith without works, which will be dead. Faith and obedience must go together. Will you go away believing, and resolving the very first opportunity to obey?

This is what God wants. Then you may believe as much as you like. Then you can just put your hand out to God and have what you want. He won't give His Spirit by limit unto you then. He won't hold you back from any of the glorious enterprises to which your soul gushes out; but He will say, 'Be it unto thee according to thy faith,' and what you now would deem impossible, what you now would look upon as vain and romantic, shall be accomplished by you.

Will you say, 'I accept Thy plan for myself, my 'time, my influence, my money, my children, my 'home, and my future; I accept it.' If so you can take hold of His hand. You will be in perfect harmony, and may claim every promise made to the saints. You have then a victorious faith, a faith that dares to presume on the promises of God; a faith that dares to step out when there appears to be no possibility of God performing His word to you; the faith that dares to stand on the naked promise, and say, 'Now, Lord, I am right with You, I have given up all, 'and I claim all. I open my mouth, it is empty, You 'will fill it. I take this step, I do not know where I 'am going any more than Abraham did, but You 'know; now I trust You to lead me forth.' Does your heart say that? If so, you may claim the blessing now.



WHAT IS THE SALVATION
ARMY?

WHAT IS THE SALVATION ARMY ?

NOTHING short of a thorough-going belief in the truths set forth in the foregoing Addresses could explain the history of this remarkable organisation, the great successes it has attained, or the bitter animosity with which it is regarded by so many. In July, 1865, William Booth, deeply impressed with the AWFUL INDIFFERENCE prevailing amongst the masses in the East of London, determined to devote himself to some special effort for their salvation. He believed that there had been an ATONEMENT made, sufficient for every sinner, and that by true repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the very worst might enter upon a new life.

He did not think that there was the slightest hope of permanently improving the condition of any of the PRODIGALS, whom he saw abounding around him, other than by leading them to see the cause of all their misery in their neglect of God, and so persuading them to turn to Him with full purpose of heart. Trusting in the same Holy Ghost, who had for many years been blessing his labours as a minister, he went out into the streets, and was very soon able to rejoice over many rescued from their evil ways, and ready to serve God with all their might.

Having laid a good foundation by requiring, not merely an assent of the mind to a statement of certain

truths, but a thorough submission of heart to abandon and separate from all evil, and to serve the New Master with all diligence, he soon had around him a number of earnest labourers willing to devote their leisure hours, their strength, and any money they could spare from their scanty earnings, to the service of the truth.

These were plain men and women, and they spoke out plainly and fearlessly to all with whom they came in contact, not only in the open air and indoor meetings, but in their workshops, at home, and wherever they could meet with their fellows. And the consequence was that the little band steadily grew and spread from point to point, until it had, at the end of 1883, 528 corps or stations, and 245 field outposts, with 103 corps abroad.

Amongst the tens of thousands now marching in the ranks of the Salvation Army, are multitudes of the most wonderful trophies of saving grace—men and women who, having run into sin with all possible greediness, and having forgotten God altogether, were attracted by some of the peculiar outward appearances of the Army to its meetings, and there aroused to deep concern about their souls, and led to cry for deliverance to the only Saviour.

The extreme diligence shown in impressing the truth on the attention of the people at all the meetings of the Army, has often led to an accusation of attempting to substitute excitement for a deep heart work; but surely our SOWING is best judged by our REAPING, and something more than excitement is necessary to produce a force of men and women who deny themselves all personal comfort and ease, and,

separating themselves from all their old friends, come out in all weathers, night after night, to do their utmost for the rescue of others, whom they see to be perishing around them.

It is, indeed, an intense and constant realisation of the great spiritual truths to which these addresses refer, that causes such earnest action on the part of almost all those who are engaged in the work of the Army. Brought, time after time, face-to-face with thousands who are, they believe, HALTING within sight of the open gate of mercy, and also within a step of the WRATH to come, our officers and soldiers press the people at every meeting to yield themselves without further delay to the Saviour; so that it is no fiction to use the phraseology of the battle-field with regard to our services. Each meeting is a real fight with the powers of darkness; and, thank God, the fight generally becomes a victory!

It is quite true that the vast majority of the men and women who have daily opportunity to speak at our meetings, are ignorant of the language of Scripture, and, indeed, of all religious phraseology to a very great extent; but they are thoroughly pervaded with those great truths which, as we have shown, are so all-important; and speaking, not in the set phraseology of any school, but as the Spirit gives them utterance in the natural language of every-day life, they so warn and touch the common people, that thousands of them are, week after week, led to the Saviour's feet.

The reality of the work thus done has been super-abundantly tested in seasons of trial. It must be a TRUE and not a FALSE faith which can enable rough men, who have been accustomed to drink and swear

and fight, and delicate women, to go through storms of abuse and even to endure all sorts of violence without retaliation. Amongst the more than 1,500 officers who have given up their lives to the work, there are very few who have not, at one time or another, known what it is to enjoy TRUE PEACE amidst the most stormy scenes of opposition out of doors. There is no doubt that a great deal of animosity aroused against the Army, has been caused by its constant plain speaking as to JUDGMENT as well as MERCY; but we prefer any sort of war of this kind—no matter what it may cost us—before the FALSE PEACE, which is to be got by compromise with the world, or by allowing the guilty to perish unwarned.

The use by the Army of brass bands, flags, uniforms, startling announcements, and a number of other peculiar means of attracting the people, are all attributable to the knowledge that the multitudes are perishing, and that all ordinary means have utterly failed to arouse them to a sense of their danger. It is notorious, thank God, that in every part of the world to which it has gone, the Army has succeeded in assembling together crowds of the most ignorant and ruffianly kind, thus proving that the means made use of have been admirably fitted for the accomplishment of the purpose in view.

Do you wish to know more of the Army? See it for yourself, read its publications; and, if you desire special information, it will always be cheerfully given if you will apply to head-quarters.

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BY MRS. BOOTH.

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